

City of Urbana, Illinois

Minutes of the Urbana Tree Commission Meeting
Public Works Engineering Conference Room
706 S. Glover Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802

Wednesday, March 5, 2014
7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Barbara Anderson, Carol Augspurgen, Stewart Berlocher, Jeff Dawson, Thom Fehrmann, Derek Liebert, Michael Stevenson

Members Absent: Darin Eastburn

Staff Present: Michael Brunk, City of Urbana Arborist
Bruce Cubberley, City of Urbana Arbor Manager

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from December 4, 2013 were presented for approval. Augspurgen moved to approve the minutes, Stevenson seconded, and the minutes were approved.

The minutes from the January 16, 2014 special meeting were presented for approval. Augspurgen moved to approve the minutes, Berlocher seconded, and the minutes were approved.

312 S. Coler Hackberry Tree Memorialization

Lisa Hatchadoorian, City of Urbana Public Arts Coordinator, explained the process for a formal call for artists in regard to the hackberry tree memorialization. She said the process included a request for proposals which outlines the selection criteria; formation of a jury panel comprised of Tree Commission members, Public Arts Commission members, and members of the public; and finally, project selection. She said the process could be tailored to fit the scope of the project, and could be completed in three to four weeks.

Commission members reviewed a list of the following memorial proposals (also see attached):

1. Public tree cookie memorial display
Brunk presented this proposal, explaining that with some volunteer effort, the project could be complete in approximately six months. Augspurger commented that this project was not a viable option if the trunk is found to be hollow. Brunk said that the top of the trunk which had already been cut was solid, but the condition of the base could not be determined until it was cut.
2. Sale of tree cookies
Brunk presented this proposal, explaining that two commitments had already been made to purchase untreated cookies for \$250 apiece. This money would be used for other memorialization projects. He said these cookies could be cut from portions of the tree which had already been removed, or could be taken from part of the remaining trunk.
3. Leave the trunk standing as is
Dawson read a letter submitted as public input by Urbana resident Ilona Matkovski stating her desire to leave the trunk standing as is. Urbana City Councilmember Dennis Roberts also addressed the Commission in support of leaving the trunk standing. Dawson noted that 2,700 wood cuttings from the tree had been preserved for propagation efforts. At this time Dawson also addressed a concern expressed by Roberts that decay in the tree was not as detrimental as had been indicated; Dawson explained that he had personally inspected the limbs which had been removed and found them to be unsound. Brunk thanked Champaign County Master Gardeners for their assistance with the tree cuttings.
4. Conference table for public use/display
Daniel Schneider, a furniture craftsman, presented this proposal. He also presented examples of his work. Dawson inquired whether there was a mill locally that could handle the size of the Hackberry logs should this proposal be selected. Schneider said such a mill was located in Argenta.
5. Urban Wood Utilization
Brunk presented this proposal. He said that wood from this project could also be used for Schneider's proposal (see #4). Dawson asked if the wood would have to be marketed as a specialty wood; Brunk said that C-U Woodshop has had success in selling wood from City trees.
6. Wood carving owl on natural log
Brunk presented this proposal. He said that Gary Cutler, an Urbana resident had offered to carve a section of wood from the hackberry tree at no cost. Brunk presented an example of Cutler's work.
7. Rough sawn bench with historic timeline
Michael Pittman, a local chainsaw carver, presented this proposal. Dawson clarified that the bench would last a number of years outdoors as long as measures were taken to protect it from the spread of moisture.

8. Finished stump and plaque

Brunk presented this proposal. Brunk said the face of the stump could be angled and the plaque placed next to it, along with some landscaping.

9. Specialty wood pens and purse hangers

Wallace Owen, a local pen-turner, presented this proposal. He presented examples of his work. He reiterated that this proposal would not require much wood. Dawson asked if any of the branch wood could be used; Owen said it might be too soft but it was possible. Owen also clarified that the wood would have to be milled into boards before he could use it.

10. Reproduced paintings

Mary Margrave, a local artist, presented this proposal. She clarified that the finished piece would be a painting, not a sketch as presented. She presented examples of her work. She also said her quoted price did not include the cost of scanning a large painting. Dawson asked if Margrave expected a portion of the sale of each print; she said she would likely only charge the City for first publication rights.

11. Replicate tree trunk

Brunk presented this proposal. He reiterated that this is another idea that does not involve use of the wood from the tree.

12. Propagate seedlings

Dawson reiterated that this project had already been started from the branch wood cuttings.

13. Group photo with hackberry

Dawson noted that this project had already been completed. Dennis Roberts addressed the Commission to express his dissatisfaction with the photograph because faces were not recognizable. Dawson said another photograph could still be taken in front of the 40-foot stump. Brunk said the photo was donated, and that some of the photos had been sold, with the proceeds going to the Legacy Tree program. He said he could provide the link to the photographer's website if others are interested in purchasing a photo. Brunk also said that the names of all the people in the photo had been collected.

14. LiDAR scan of tree

Dawson said this project had already been completed. He opined that the scan be archived, and the image be used in the Legacy Tree program brochure. Steve Wald, an Urbana resident who helped oversee the scan, discussed how the public could interact with the scanned image.

15. Botanical ink drawing of hackberry tree

Brunk presented this proposal, and said the drawing had already been commissioned for use in the Legacy Tree program brochure. Dawson pointed out that this image could also be put on a poster and sold.

Public Input

Steve Wald, an Urbana resident, addressed the commission to commend efforts to hear the public's opinion about this tree, and also thanked the local artists who presented proposals. He gave the Commission some suggestions regarding memorialization project selection and expressed the importance of memorializing the tree. He inquired about the status of the tree's designation as a Legacy tree, and said he would like to see more information about the tree and its history on the City's website.

John Marlin, a member of the Urbana City Council, addressed the Commission regarding the importance of preserving native tree species.

Dennis Roberts addressed the commission with an example of a plaque he created to demarcate Legacy trees. Roberts also expressed his concern with plans to remove City trees at Lincoln Square mall in order to install seating for patrons. Bruce Cubberley, Urbana Arbor Manager, addressed this concern, noting that the trees to be removed were in decline. He also explained that the plan had already been approved by City Council. Dawson said the Commission would discuss how such removals come under the review of the Commission; Brunk said he would also like the commission to discuss reasons for recommended removal other than the tree being a hazard.

At this time, Dawson thanked the mayor for garnering the funds necessary to keep the stump standing while memorialization proposals are heard.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Femi Fletcher, Recording Secretary
Tree Commission