

City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission
May 21, 2020 Meeting
Via Zoom

In attendance:
Susan Allen
Jan Von Qualen
Amy McEuen
Ernestine Lawrence
Jeff Reim

The meeting was called to order at 10:06am by Chairwoman Von Qualen. The Chairwoman then gave a few minutes for reflection and sharing on the events currently happening around the Country.

Next on the agenda was the approval of the minutes of January 15, 2020 Meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission. Ms. Allen pointed minor spelling correction that needed to be made to the minutes. Ms Lawrence made a motion to approve the January 15 minutes with stated corrections. Dr. McEuen seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Next, was the approval of the minutes from the Forestry Planning Subcommittee Meeting that was held on February 21, 2020. A motion was made by Dr. McEuen and seconded by Ms. Lawrence to approve the minutes. The motion was approved without objection.

Next, the approval for the minutes from the Urban Forestry Commission Meeting held on February 21st. Dr. McEuen made a motion to approve. Ms. Lawrence seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Last, the approval of the minutes from Urban Forestry Commission Meeting held on March 11, 2020. Dr. McEuen made a motion to approve and Ms Lawrence seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the distribution of the living oak trees. Chairwoman Von Qualen directed everyone's attention to a spreadsheet with the distribution of the trees by ward. She did express concern about the lack of distribution of trees in Wards 1 and 2. Dr. McEuen suggested posting something on a local Facebook group "Springfield Families Helping Families".

Chairwoman Von Qualen gave a brief overview of the tree distribution program.

Next, the Commission moved to the tree plan. Chairwoman Von Qualen, Ms. Hawkins and City Arborist Jeff Reim have been working on the tree plan. Mr. Reim stated that he has been revising a manual from 1991. He stated that his current draft is 74 pages long and is looking forward to some feedback from the UFC on the specs manual. He encouraged everyone to

read through it for their approval. The committee members stated that they were eager to look over the new draft specifications manual. Mr. Reim also offered to send the previous manual for comparison.

Chairwoman Von Qualen stated that she and Ms. Hawkins had work on a brief tree plan that she will plan to send out after the review of the specifications manual.

Next, Chairwoman Von Qualen moved to community engagement ideas. She suggested putting something in the Mayor's weekly email to keep people interested in trees and to publicize the work of the Urban Forestry Commission. Ms. Allen agreed that it would be a good idea. She volunteered to give information to the Mayor's office for inclusion in the weekly email. Mr. Reim stated that he would talk with Public Works Director Nate Bottom to gauge his interest in doing this work.

Mr. Reim asked for an update on when the state might begin to gather again. Ms. Hawkins gave a brief update on changes to the stay at home orders. Mr. Reim then gave an update on the budget. The projection is that the tree program will need to be cut by 20-30% due to the fall-off in budget revenues. Chairwoman Von Qualen and Ms. Allen both stated that they understood the shift in priorities that will need to come into play. Dr. McEuen mentioned that there might still be a way to let the citizens make donations to the tree program.

Ms. Allen shifted the conversation to the grants from Morton Arboretum and the Department of Natural Resources. She mentioned that the grants would have to have a matching portion. She stated that this could potentially be a partnership with Springfield Green. Mr. Reim asked if the money could be matched from the budgeted amount that was planned for in the fall?

Chairwoman Von Qualen stated that we would need to get more of the specifics around the grant application and more specifics about the budgeted amount that would be allowed. Ms. Allen stated that she has looked into it more in-depth. She volunteered that she would indicate the UFC's interest in the program. Mr. Reim will forward the information along to Director Bottom and Deputy Mayor Drew to see the level of interest that the City would have.

Ms. Allen gave more background on the grant process with Morton Arboretum. Mr. Reim stated that he would get the thoughts of Public Works Director Bottom before we make a decision to move forward. Dr. McEuen mentioned that this could be in conjunction with getting a tree plan together and doing a tree inventory.

Ms. Hawkins made a motion to indicate the UFC's interest in the Morton Arboretum's grant process. Ms. Lawrence seconded the motion. The motion carried without objection.

Next, Chairwoman Von Qualen moved to the fall tree planting program. She stated that she would take a look at the draft specifications manual. She stated that she had talked with Ms. Polly Poskin in the Harvard Park area and she had mentioned some ideas of where trees should be planted. Mr. Reim stated that Director Bottom would like to see the trees split up and equally in the different wards. Ms. Lawrence stated that she would like to see more trees

planted along South Grand Avenue. Ms. Allen asked about the practical impact of the budget cuts on the tree. Mr. Reim stated that it will cut back to roughly 400 trees available to be planted City-wide.

Mr. Reim brought up the schedule for future meetings. He asked if we wanted to set up the next meeting for June 10th. A discussion ensued about when the next meeting should be scheduled for. There was an agreement to have a meeting on June 10th at 10am via Zoom. Chairwoman Von Qualen and Mr. Reim stated that they will make sure that the meeting will be available for anyone to participate online. Dr. McEuen stated that there needs to be an opportunity for the public to participate in these meetings.

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Reim about other trees that have been taken down. Mr. Reim stated that there have only been a few that he has talked with the Commission about. Ms. Lawrence and Ms. Allen both thanked Mr. Reim for all of his hard work.

Ms. Lawrence made a motion to adjourn, Chairwoman Von Qualen seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 10:56am.