



City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission Meeting  
Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 2pm

In attendance:

Amy McEuen

Jan Von Qualen

Susan Allen

Ernestine Lawrence

Randy Belville

Nate Bottom – ex-officio

Jeff Reim – ex-officio

Jan called the meeting to order at 2:05p and took attendance of the group.

A motion was made by Ernestine to approve the minutes from meeting on November 4, 2020. That motion was seconded by Rianne. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Next on the agenda was a brief discussion on the Morton Arboretum Grant. Susan Allen reported that the City has been granted \$20,000 and chosen a contractor, Great Lakes Urban Forestry Management (Graf Tree Care, Inc.), to do a tree inventory in the Northeast quadrant of the City. Susan then walked the Committee through the requirements of the Grant. She also reported that the City is committed to using matching dollars to repair any problems that will be identified through the tree survey.

Susan then fielded questions about the Grant and its specifications. Director Bottom committed to working with the City's Corporation Counsel's office to develop an ordinance as required by the Grant agreement. Susan and Jeff responded to questions about the Grant agreement and the area in which the tree survey will be done. A discussion occurred about how the tree survey will be publicized and done in the neighborhoods. A discussion ensued about the actual administration and reporting requirements for the Grant and the steps that will be required for the staff.

There were a few questions about the actual tree survey itself. The Contractor will collect geographical information and basic information about each of the trees in the area. Jeff also reported that he will work to get that information into the City's GIS system as well. It is estimated that the tree survey should be done within the year, hopefully. The information

provided could also include an estimated replacement value for each of the trees, if the City opts to add that. The City committed to adding the attributes for any memorial tree program trees into the system. Jan thanked Susan and Jeff for their work on securing the Grant for the City.

Next, the Commission moved on to discussing the seedling planting program. Randy explained some background of the program and where the initial seedlings have been planted. He stated that he will work with the City to continue to plant these seedlings along Stanford Ave. The first round of seedlings is from a grant that the City had received in 2020. This new round has been done through generous donations of Randy and a group of volunteers. Discussion ensued about publicity around the program and testing the type of trees that are being planted. Next, the Commission moved onto an update about the City budget. Director Bottom stated that there will be a budget hearing at the beginning of February 2021. He stated that \$100,000 has been budgeted for tree planting for the next year. He is anticipating that the amount will be cut during the budget process. Director Bottom committed to discussing the budget for planting trees and the goal of planting 500 trees during the upcoming budget hearings.

Next, Jeff moved onto talking about maintenance regarding the tree grates that are located downtown. He stated that they are putting together a team to address the downtown area. Randy cautioned about the danger that, with freezing and thawing, the grates could cause splitting and mortality of the trees. Director Bottom stated that he would work to create a beautification crew to help to maintain the different green spaces throughout the City. Discussion ensued about the further maintenance of the trees in various parts of the City. Jeff answered questions about the ongoing maintenance of the downtown trees and the grates around the trees.

The next item on the agenda was planning for Arbor Day 2021. Ernestine gave an update on planning for Arbor Day and working with the Boys and Girls Club. She reported that there is a cost for any ribbons that would be given to the grade school students and gift cards for the high school students. Ernestine and Jeff fielded questions about the Arbor Day programming. And they fielded questions about a potential proclamation by the Mayor. The program would occur on April 27th.

Next, the Commission moved on to discussing the City's Landscaping Regulations to the building and zoning department. Randy will provide some addresses for Jeff to pass on to the Building and Zoning Administrator.

Moving onto to old business, Randy brought up the issues around the Landscaping Regulations in the City Zoning Code to make sure that they are consistent with the concerns raised in the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team ("R/UDAT") 2002 Report for Springfield. He suggested forming a subcommittee to look at those regulations. Randy and Jan volunteered to help form a subcommittee to work on these issues.

Jan stated that she would work to pull together some ideas around implementing a memorial tree program and to develop rules of how it would work.

Randy asked about the vacancy on the Urban Forestry Commission. There was nothing new to report on this issue. Jeff committed to asking for an update from the Mayor's executive assistant Bonnie Drew.

Susan suggested doing a social media campaign around Arbor Day to help promote the value of trees. She also mentioned reaching out to a Faith in Place, a faith-based environmental organization for recommendations about publicizing the value of trees. Discussions ensued about using the social media accounts to promote Arbor Day. Susan will also do additional follow up with regards to reaching out to the Faith community.

Jan asked Jeff about additional grants for bare root trees. Jeff stated that he does not have the capacity to do any other grants at this point in time.

Jan reported that the next meeting will be on March 10th at 2p via zoom. She also highlighted a few upcoming events that will be occurring in the next few months:

March 10 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Next UFC meeting;

Sangamon County Big Read events:



**Academy of Lifelong Learning**  
Lincoln Land Community College



- March 31, 5:30 – 7:00, Citizen's Club/Center for State Policy. Big Read Program;
- April 14, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., by Zoom, Dr. McEuen presents 'Plant an Illinois Native' as part of the ALL NEA Sangamon County Big Read;
- April 27, Arbor Day event at Boys & Girls Club.

Jan also stated that there will be a signature page going around for signatures on the Tree Plan that the Urban Forestry Commission will submit.

With no further business to come before the Urban Forestry Commission, a motion was made by Randy to adjourn. It was seconded by Amy. The motion passed unanimously; the meeting was adjourned at 3:06pm