



**City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission
Minutes**

4:00 p.m. September 8, 2021 via Zoom

The meeting was called to Order at 4 p.m.

In attendance were Susan Allen, Randy Belville, Ernestine Lawrence, Amy McEuen, Jan Von Qualen, Jeff Reim, and Scott Rogers

Jeff Reim introduced special guest, Deputy Mayor Kathleen Alcorn.

Susan Allen introduced Debbie Fleugel, Program Manager, Illinois for Trees Forever. Ms. Fleugal said that Trees Forever's mission is to help people plant trees. She described the carbon credit program that Trees Forever and Morton Arboretum are piloting this fall in conjunction with City Forest Credits. The program is intended to allow smaller cities to receive carbon credits for planting trees. The City would sign an agreement for Trees Forever to be the operator with a 25-year commitment. If Springfield planted 500 trees a year, it could receive \$15,000 to \$20,000 for carbon credits over 25 years. If the City planted more trees, they could be included in the program, as well. The trees would be planted in "safe spaces," where they would be safe from removal. The amount of carbon credit would depend on the size and type of trees planted, i.e., more credits would be given to hard wood species like oaks. An independent third party would verify and certify the trees on the first, third, sixth, and twenty-fifth years. Trees Forever and City Forest Credits would map the trees on a GIS based platform. There is an anticipated death rate for the trees, but if tree deaths exceeded that rate, the City would have to repay the carbon credits.

Randy Belville made a motion to approve the July 14, 2021 Minutes. It was seconded by Ernestine Lawrence and passed unanimously.

Regarding the Morton Arboretum grant, Jeff Reim reported that the tree inventory will begin this fall. There was discussion about the grant requirements that the inventory be publicized, and that the contractor shall meet with the community to outline project goals and plans specific to the community before the project begins. Jeff is going to get an explanation as to what is required. Susan Allen prepared the September report.

One of the suggestions for publicizing the inventory was that the UFC could write letters to the editor to the State Journal Register and the Illinois Times. Amy McEuen made a motion, seconded by Ernestine Lawrence, approving Susan Allen and Jan Von Qualen to write letters to the editor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ernestine Lawrence introduced special guests John Stremsterfer, President and CEO, and Sarah Helm, Vice President of Development, for the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. Mr. Stremsterfer indicated that a fund for planting trees could be created with a minimum endowment of \$20,000. There is also the possibility of an Acorn fund, which could start at any level. It was noted that the UFC is not a separate entity from the City and has no authority or budget. Mr. Stremsterfer indicated that generally endowments are initiated by one large donation from an individual, family, or business.

Randy Belville has not yet heard from Forrest Keeling about what bare root seedlings will be available for the Spring tree give-away. He will follow up.

Jeff Reim reported that 43 tree grates have been removed and the trees have been mulched. Public works will pick up more grates in September and October after branch pick up.

There was discussion about the UFC being involved in the joint City/IDOT MacArthur Boulevard project. Concern was raised that trees and landscape considerations be included in the plan. Randy Belville will scan and email a summary of the plan to Commissioners. Jeff Reim will get us a contact person. It was noted that our newest Commissioner, Scott Marlow, works for IDOT and will be able to provide guidance.

Amy McEuen has reached out to professors at UIS about the possibility of seniors entering data from the inventory with i-tree. She said this could serve as the student's required capstone project. This item will be back on the Agenda in January as that is when the students will be planning their projects.

Jan Von Qualen made a motion that the UFC should have a special open meeting in October so that Scott Marlow could be included in discussions about the MacArthur Blvd. project. The motion was seconded by Amy McEuen and was unanimously approved. The meeting will be set for October 8 or 20, depending upon availability.

Old Business: Jan again requested that notices of the UFC meetings be posted in the City Announcements email that is widely circulated every Friday.

New Business: Anne Logue of Sustainable Springfield has five chestnut trees to plant in the City and is looking for suggestions as to where to plant them. Randy Belville suggested Stanford Avenue on the eastside between Dirksen and Fox Bridge Road. Jeff will look at the parkway and confirm.

Ernestine Lawrence reported that she contacted McClernand Elementary School (near the Springfield Art Association on north 5th Street) about one or two classes participating in the Arbor Day Celebration in 2022. Arbor Day will be April 29. Ernestine suggested the celebration could include planting a few trees. It was agreed that ribbons and gift cards for the participants worked out very well in 2021 and should be included in 2022.

Randy Belville raised concerns about the number of dead ash trees on private property. He noted that businesses are required to maintain living green infrastructure on their property. If dead trees are seen at businesses Jeff should be notified. Randy said it would nice if we could get a licensed tree trimmer and some funds for people who need to remove the dead trees from their property.

Susan Allen reported that she has spoken to Drs. McEuen and Vazquez about an educational program about oaks this fall. Randy suggested that Guy Sternberg be added to the program. Jan made a motion that the program include Drs. McEuen, Vazquez, and Guy Sternberg. The motion was seconded by Randy and passed unanimously.

Public comments. Sue Rempfer thanked the UFC for its efforts and suggested that Trees Forever could contact homeowners' associations and the school district about its project.

The date for the October meeting will be circulated, later. The next scheduled meeting is November 10, 2021.

Amy McEuen made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Randy Belville. The motion passed unanimously.