



**City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission
Minutes
3:30 p.m. February 9, 2023
Room 203, Municipal Center West and via Zoom**

The meeting was called to Order at 3:30 p.m.

In attendance were Susan Allen, Randy Belville, Ernestine Lawrence, Amy McEuen, Jan Von Qualen, Jeff Reim, Dan Brill and Nate Bottom. Absent were Scott Marlow, and Erskine Route.

Amy McEuen made a motion to approve the November 11, 2022, Minutes, as corrected to include approved meeting dates. Susan Allen seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Jeff Reim announced that the downtown project is finished; 152 trees were planted! All that remains is for the contractor to come back to remove excess mulch, trim; straighten, and replace some trees.

The inventory of the northeast quadrant has been completed. Graf Tree Company has provided a draft of the Urban Forestry Management Plan updated to include the second half of the northeast inventory. Nate Bottom indicated that the City intends to continue the inventory process with the near portion of the southeast quadrant. He plans to have the older central neighborhood trees inventoried, then continue the inventory in the newer subdivisions. There was an enthusiastic discussion of Steve Lane's presentation to Council, which was well received.

Jan Von Qualen reported that Inner City Older Neighborhoods (ICON) honored the UFC with its Good Neighbor Award for Public Service at its annual meeting on November 28, 2022.

Jeff announced that the City has been awarded the \$25,000 grant for planting trees in the inventoried northeast quadrant. The Grant comes through the U.S. Forest Service, through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and will be administered by Morton Arboretum. Susan Allen reported that Donna Davlantis was very helpful with the application. Jeff said Donna is finalizing the paperwork for the grant.

Jan reported that a \$25,000 grant for tree pruning and training in the inventoried northeast quadrant is in the works. The grant is funded by the Melvin Wing Charitable Trust Fund. Nate suggested that the grant be finalized in May with the tree work to take place in October and later. This schedule will accommodate oak trees, which must be pruned during dormancy.

There was also a discussion of the \$1 billion in funds for urban forestry grants under the Inflation Reduction Act. These funds could go toward large future-looking projects, staff, such as a sustainability planner, or other ambitious projects.

Randy Belville reported that the City has ordered (50) Serviceberry, (100) Redbud, (100) Flowering Dogwood, and (50) Witchhazel bare root trees for its Spring giveaways. In addition, he said that applications for the tree grant from Living Lands and Waters (LLW) will open on February 15. This year LLW is offering Burr, Red, Swamp white oaks, and Shagbark hickory trees. Randy also said that LLW offers summer internships for its work cleaning rivers. Jan said that Forest Releaf will also begin taking applications for tree grants soon.

Randy and Jan spoke to Dr. Anne-Marie Hansen's class of UIS seniors about working with the UFC for their capstone project. Mallory Daugherty met with Jan and Anne Logue of Sustainable Springfield about helping with our projects. Steven Simpson Black is going to do a related independent study. He is researching the cost/benefit of green vs. gray infrastructure for water run-off. In particular, he is looking at the area around the Lincoln home where there was a formerly a creek. Nate said the City has a storm water master plan, but certainly would be interested in working with Steven. Dan Brill suggested that green infrastructure along parking lots would be helpful.

Ernestine Lawrence reported that Sierra Shepherd at the Boys and Girls Club has agreed to coordinate an Arbor Day event at the Club on April 28 at 4:00 p.m. Susan and Ernestine reached out to the Illinois Audubon Society about providing the educational component in one hour increments in advance of the event. Ernestine asked and Randy agreed to be the Master of Ceremonies. Jeff said he will begin the process of getting ribbons and gift cards for the students.

Jeff announced that Earth Day will be celebrated on Saturday, April 22 at the Henson Robinson Zoo. Jeff will be unable to do the set-up on the day of the event, as he will be out-of-town. But, he will organize everything in advance. Randy said he will deliver the bareroot trees for the give-away, but as that is one of his busiest days, he cannot stay to set up. Ruth Oliver, Amy McEuen, and others said they will be there.

Amy suggested and it was agreed that the UFC should plan for another tree planting workshop shortly after the Earth and Arbor Day events. Dan suggested that the tree planning take place out at the Lake.

Randy Belville spoke to Guy Sternberg and Guy is available and will present an educational program on either the 19th or 26th of October, depending on the availability of Lincoln Library. The topic is yet to be determined. Suggestions were the role of arboretums, current diseases, such as emerald ash borer or other topics at Guy's discretion.

Jeff said that the treatment given to the Sweetgum trees last year for gumballs decreased gumballs by about 25-30%. The City intends to continue the treatment this year. It is anticipated that the effectiveness will increase as the treatment continues.

Randy and Jan met with Matt McLaughlin and John Harris about using the City landscape requirements to encourage planting natives and the species recommended in the Arboricultural Specifications Manual (ASM). Matt and John agreed to provide the ASM tree lists to the landscapers with whom they work. There was also discussion of promoting the use of native perennials and shrubs. There is currently no such list in the ASM. After the meeting, Randy and Jan reached out to Susan Helm, who does native planting projects, Alana McKean of Star Hill Arboretum, and Trish Quintenz President of Central Illinois Native Plant Society to form a working group to assemble lists of perennials and shrubs. It was noted that the landscape ordinance (§102.20) requirements will need to be updated to refer to the ASM.

There was a discussion of the Champion Deam oak and other trees at CWLP's Cotton Hill Park: their care and the possibility of a tree inventory at the Lake or at certain parks there.

Amy made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ernestine. The motion passed unanimously.