



**City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission
Minutes
3:30 p.m. June 8, 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, Ernestine Lawrence, Amy McEuen, Jan Von Qualen, Dave Fuchs, Nate Bottom, Jeff Reim, and Dan Brill. Randy Belville, Scott Marlowe, and Erskine Route were absent.

Amy McEuen made a motion to approve the April 13, 2023, Minutes. Ernestine Lawrence seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Dave Fuchs, the newly appointed Director of Public Works introduced himself. He stated that he was taught from a young age to respect and appreciate trees. Dave assured that trees are one of his priorities and that he will support the UFC's efforts to enlarge and diversify the Springfield urban forest.

On the Spring planting, Jeff Reim reports about 46 trees were planted in areas all over the City; 77 were planted in North Gate. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Tree Planting Grant will be put out in 30 to 45 days. Those trees will be planted in the Fall. The RFP has been modified to so that tree substitutions will not be allowed. There was a discussion regarding where the new trees will be planted. Jeff noted that it is difficult for the City to water trees planted in the parkway and that some homeowners object to a tree being planted in front of their house. It was agreed that the UFC should work with Adina Rivas to create a door hanger that will inform residents of tree benefits; that there will be a tree planting in their area; and encourage them to welcome a tree in their parkway. Another suggestion is for members of the UFC to reach out to neighborhood associations and talk to them about the benefits of trees. The new Chief of Staff is Mike Disco or the County Regional Planning Commission has a comprehensive list of neighborhood associations.

There was discussion about a homeowner having a large red oak removed from their parkway at the corner of Parkview and Oakmont Drives. The Tree Protection Ordinance and Arboricultural Specifications Manual prohibit removal of parkway trees without the consent of the City Arborist. They also require that only certified arborists work on City trees. It was agreed that many citizens and many tree cutting services are ignorant of these requirements. Susan Allen and Jan Von Qualen agreed to draft a letter to be sent to all the tree cutting services in Sangamon County, informing them of these requirements.

Ernestine Lawrence reported that the April 28, Arbor Day Celebration at the Boys and Girls Club of Central Illinois (BGCCI) was well-attended. Mayor Langfelder, Alders Shawn Gregory and Lakeisha Purchase, and Jennifer Gill, Superintendent of School District 186 attended. Alderwoman Purchase requested that the Arbor Day Celebration take place at the new downtown YMCA in 2024.

Several hundred trees were distributed at the Earth Day Awareness tree give-away. People were surprised at the size of the potted trees granted to the City by Forest Re-leaf. Several persons remarked that they come to the Earth Day Celebration to get trees.

Ernestine, Susan, Amy, and Jan participated in Girl Scouts at the Capital, encouraging young people to be aware of and appreciate trees. The tree planting demonstration at the Lake, took place at 5 p.m. on May 8, 2023, at UIS Field Station, 9 Club Area.

There was a discussion about the need to apply for the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Grant by June 1, 2023. Susan had prepared a proposal to address health disparities between the wealthy and disadvantaged neighborhoods in Springfield; no City match will be required for grants improving urban forests in under-served areas. Susan's initial proposal was to request \$778,750. The money would be allocated: \$200,000 to plant 100 trees each year for 5 years in disadvantaged neighborhoods; \$500,000 for a Community Outreach Arborist for disadvantaged neighborhoods, and \$78,750 for wages for three Arborist Student Workers from under-served neighborhoods. Susan met with Dave, Nate Bottom, Jeff, and Jan to discuss the grant proposal. Nate suggested and all agreed that the ask for tree planting be increased to \$400,000 to plant 1,000 trees. Susan was given the go-ahead to work with Donna Davlantis to get the request filed by the deadline June 1. Donna was able to file the application before the deadline. A big thank you was given to all.

Jan will send a copy of the proposed grant for tree maintenance from the Melvin Wing Charitable Trust Fund to Dave.

In New Business, Dan Brill noted that about 150 mature trees were clear cut from the lot where the Fire Department Station will be built. There was a discussion about the need for education across all City departments, about the benefits of trees and the City commitment to protect them.

Susan proposed that the UFC partner with the Faith Coalition for the Common Good and the Park District to plan a harvest party/fruit festival in 2024, to celebrate nut and fruit trees.

Ernestine gave a thank you note to the UFC for its recognition of the death of her father. Ernestine shared his obituary, which gave a summary of his many accomplishments.

Nate was thanked for his cooperation and gracious support of the UFC over the last three years.

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