



**City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission
Minutes
3:30 p.m. October 11, 2023
Room 203, Municipal Center West and via Zoom**

The meeting was called to Order.

In attendance were Susan Allen, Randy Belville, Ernestine Lawrence, Amy McEuen, Jan Von Qualen, Dave Fuchs, Nate Bottom, and Dan Brill. Erskine Route and Scott Marlowe were absent.

Amy McEuen made a motion to approve the August 8, 2023, Minutes, as corrected. Ernestine Lawrence seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Nate Bottom reported that the job description for the City Arborist has been updated with the requirement that the arborist be certified. The opening for a certified arborist will be posted in the next day or two. Concern was raised about the salary previously listed. Nate said that there is a range of salaries. The previous listing named only the bottom of the range. He will speak to Human Resources about posting the bottom to mid-range, which would be considered for a new hire.

There was a discussion about the 2022 Arboricultural Specifications Manual (ASM) and the Tree Preservation Ordinance (Ch. 102 of the City Code) approved by City Council July 5, 2023. The ordinance provides that the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) shall advise and consult the arborist on amendments to the ASM. On July 13, 2022, the UFC approved a motion that the 2022 amendments to the ASM be posted for public comments. The UFC voted to approve the amendments to the ASM on September 14, 2022. However, the ASM as amended has not been posted to the UFC or Public Works website. With the clarification that the ASM was incorporated by reference into the Preservation Ordinance approved by Council, Dave Fuchs and Nate Bottom agreed that the amended ASM should be uploaded onto the UFC and Public Works websites.

Nate reported that the City received only one bid in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the fall 55 tree planting. The bid was for between \$1,075 to \$1,300 per tree. The City had budgeted for \$450 per tree. The RFP will be re-posted. For a spring planting. There was discussion on how to lower the cost of trees. Susan Allen indicated that she did not think there was a size requirement in the grant, but she will confirm that with Nate. There is a size requirement in the ASM. Changing that will be placed on the next UFC meeting Agenda. Randy Belville has requested Vince from Carlin sales to send the City a list of vendors to be notified of the RFP. Other vendors who wish to be notified of the RFP can sign up by going to the 'I want to' then 'bid opportunity' buttons on the City's purchasing webpage.

On October 10, 2023, Mayor Buscher issued the press release about the federal grant of \$889,027 from the U.S. Forest Service to plant 1,000 trees and to hire a community outreach arborist and three student worker arborists during the summer months over a five-year period. Dave Fuchs said the press release generated a lot of interest. He will be giving an interview about it next week.

The Melvin Wing Charitable Trust Tree Maintenance Grant is on hold until the City hires an arborist.

Dates for the 2024 UFC meetings were discussed. Amy McEuen made a motion that the meetings be held at 3:30 on the second Thursdays of the month: Feb. 8; March 14; April 11; June 13; and Aug. 8, except the October meeting which would be held on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. Ernestine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Randy Belville made a motion that the UFC adopt a standing subcommittee to work on (1) grants; (2) amendments to the Landscape Ordinance and sustainability issues; (3) educational and Arbor Day programs; and (4) Lake Springfield issues. Jan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Susan, Amy, Ernestine, and Dan Brill volunteered to be the point person, respectively for the grants, Landscape Ordinance, education and Arbor Day, and Lake subcommittees.

Dave asked what has been done for past Arbor Day events. Ernestine explained that the past events have been held at the Springfield Boys and Girls Club of Central Illinois (BGCCI). The goal is to educate the students about the importance of trees. The students participate in a tree related activity in the week or weeks before Arbor Day. The Mayor issues a proclamation (required by the Arbor Day Foundation for Tree City USA designation) about the importance of trees. Mike Brunk, the Urban Forester at the Department of Natural Resources, has given a brief speech; and students all help to plant a tree donated by the City. The Superintendent of District 186, City Council members, and members of the public are invited to attend. The students are given ribbons and \$5.00 gift certificates for McDonalds. Bare root trees are also available for those who want them.

Susan Allen noted that at the 2023 event Alderwoman Lakeisha Purchase asked that the 2024 Arbor Day event be held at the YMCA (Y) in the medical district. Ernestine and Susan met with Lou Bart of the Y. He was enthusiastic. The Y has an after-school program for students. Tiffany Mathis of the BCGCCI could be invited to bring a bus of her students. Bare-root trees could be offered, and the Y has a large area where trees could be planted.

Under Old Business, Randy suggested that work be continued on amendments to the Landscape Ordinance. He said he plans for the UFC to work with Matt McLaughlin and John Harris at Public Works and with local landscape companies so that when the amended ordinance is presented it will have broad public support. The goal for the amendments is to encourage businesses to plant satisfy the landscape requirements by planting native species. Dan suggested that there also be requirements to address water drainage for large parking lots. Porous surface, rain gardens, and other features to allow absorption instead of rainwater run-off could be promoted. Randy said that Schaumburg has incorporated some of these in its landscape. Scott Marlowe may have valuable insights. Jan will ask Mike Brunk where examples of these requirements have been adopted.

Guy Sternberg will give his presentation about local legacy trees from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on October 25 at the Lincoln Library.

Amy made a Motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Jan, and carried unanimously.