

Urban Forestry Commission
Forestry Plan Subcommittee

February 7, 2020 3:00pm

300 S 7th St, Conference Room 203 Municipal Center West

The Forestry Plan Subcommittee of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) met on February 7, 2020 in the Public Works Conference Room in the Municipal Center West. Randy Bellville, Rianne Hawkins, Amy McEuen, Jeff Reim, and Jan Von Qualen of the UFC were present. Mike Brunk, Urban Forest Administrator for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources also attended.

A tree inventory is a Hazard Abatement Survey: the number one priority for a tree inventory is public safety. The first step in forest management is to find out where the hazards are, and which trees are in the worst shape. It took 3 months for Davey Resource Group to conduct a Tree Inventory in Urbana. The inventory was done in winter so the structure and health of the trees could be seen.

For its tree risk assessment, Urbana used a 10-point hazard rating. Trees with a 10-point rating pose an imminent danger that needs to be addressed today. Lower ratings should be addressed within the week, month, year, or within a regular tree pruning schedule. After a Hazard Abatement Survey, the regular tree pruning schedule can be organized to go through neighborhoods based on the number of hazards in the 6 to 7-point hazard range. The people doing the Hazard Abatement Survey could, at the same time, mark and report sidewalks that are in poor condition.

Urbana had one crew go through each neighborhood trimming trees for the dead wood and clearance. The first rotation took 13 years. Subsequent rotations took less time. As compared to trimming trees on a complaint by complaint basis, scheduling pruning by neighborhood, based on hazards increases efficiency, resulting in decreased storm damage in the City.

There are ways to control the cost of a Tree Inventory. There are several providers: Graf Tree Inventory Co , Davey Resource Group, and others. Companies differ in the process, details collected, and cost. The Tree Inventory could be done in quadrants of the City at a time. Per tree costs could be lowered by partnering with the Park District and/or other local communities (Jerome, Leland Grove, Grandview, etc.). Grants are available that could help cover the costs. The City could partner with a not-for-profit, like Springfield Green, to raise funds for forest management.

We do not know the number, diversity, age, or health of the trees in the Springfield forest. The UFC can begin by drafting a Forestry Plan to identify and prioritize goals. Members of the Plan subcommittee will look at the template from Morton Arboretum and each will begin to draft a subpart. The subcommittee will meet again at 3 p.m. in the Public Works conference room on Feb. 21, 2020, to continue the discussion.