

Springfield Urban Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2020
5:00pm, City Council Chambers

Chairperson Jan Von Qualen called the meeting to order and called for attendance of the members. Members present included: Jan Von Qualen, Susan Allen, Amy McEuen, Ernestine Lawrence, Rianne Hawkins, and Randy Belville. Also in attendance were City Arborist Jeff Reim and Deputy Mayor, Bonnie Drew.

First item on the agenda was a discussion about the redevelopment and re-landscaping at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Mr. Mal Hildebrand from the Board of Elders at Westminster Church. He explained in depth the redevelopment project that Westminster Church has planned for the property that they own at the corner of Edwards and MacArthur Boulevard. He shared with the Commission plans that they have for landscaping and replanting of the trees that they have removed. He also detailed the plans that they have for helping to beautify the neighborhood surrounding the Church.

During the course of the discussions, Deputy Mayor Bonnie Drew addressed the Commission and stressed the Commission's advisory role when it came to trees in the City of Springfield.

There was back and forth with the Commission and Mr. Hildebrand about the types of trees that they are planning to plant on their property. The Commission stressed the need for diversity and the preference for native plants, when possible.

That discussion moved into a discussion about the process that the Urban Forestry Commission can use to adequately provide their advice on a case by case bases. It was agreed that, when possible, City Arborist Reim would email the Commission to ask for their advice and recommendations.

The discussion then turned to the plans made for the Arbor Day Celebration to take place on April 14th. Susan Allen and Ernestine Lawrence detailed their plans for the Arbor Day Celebrations in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club. They also asked for input on various aspects of the planned activities. Rianne Hawkins also mentioned that there is an opportunity for additional sponsorships from other clubs and organizations to help to defray the costs as well.

City Arborist Reim also mentioned that the City of Springfield is planning Earth Day Celebrations on April 18th. He asked for members of the Tree Commission to help with the distributions of trees at the event.

Chairperson Von Qualen stated that she would like to make a report to the City Council at the next opportunity which would be on May 19th or 26th. She also reminded the Commission that the next Urban Forestry Commission will be held on May 13th.

Questions arose as to the status of Springfield Green. Rianne Hawkins pointed out that there was money lined out in the budget for Springfield Green. City Arborist Reim stated that it was his understanding that Springfield Green was currently defunct, but that he would check into it further and follow up with the Commission.

Amy McEuen stated that she is going to give a presentation on March 12th at the Adams Wildlife Plant Sanctuary. She encouraged everyone to come to her presentation.

Chairperson Von Qualen adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.