

City of Urbana, Illinois

Minutes of the Urbana Tree Commission Meeting
Public Works Engineering Conference Room
706 S. Glover Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802

Wednesday, March 6, 2013
2:00 P.M.

Members Present: Barbara Anderson, Carol Augspurger, Stewart Berlocher, Jeff Dawson, Darin Eastburn, Michael Stevenson

Members Absent: Thom Fehrmann

Staff Present: Michael Brunk, City of Urbana Arborist
Bruce Cubberley, Arbor Manager

Others Present: Dennis Roberts, Urbana City Alderman, Ward 5

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from December 5, 2012 were presented for approval. Eastburn moved to approve the minutes, Stevenson seconded, and the minutes were approved.

The minutes from January 16, 2013 were presented for approval. Eastburn moved to approve the minutes, Dawson seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Public Input

Dennis Roberts addressed the Commission to praise the list of participation incentives on the Legacy Tree Program draft, and to express concern that two of the incentives had been changed or eliminated from the draft. He was concerned that the list of incentives no longer included a one-year abatement of the Storm Water Utility Fee, and that the amount of free mulch from the Landscape Recycling Center had been reduced from six cubic yards to five cubic yards. He also encouraged the Commission to include reduction on City-required parking spaces (in commercial parking lots) as an additional incentive.

Roberts expressed concern with a requirement in the Legacy Tree Program draft that, in order to be nominated, trees must have a trunk diameter of 48 inches. Brunk clarified that this requirement would not be included on final program documents.

Roberts also encouraged the Commission to add a clause in the Legacy Tree ordinance indicating that Legacy trees will be protected on any property that receives redevelopment funds from the City of Urbana. He suggested that properties applying for these funds be inspected from an arboreal standpoint to determine whether any trees on that property might deserve protection under this ordinance. Brunk said that this type of regulation may be able to stand on its own (outside the Legacy Tree ordinance), and that it should be addressed with the City's Community Development staff.

Discussion ensued regarding incentives, with commission members in general agreement that the incentives suggested by Roberts should be presented to staff for consideration. Brunk said he would inform staff of Roberts' incentive suggestions. Cubberley clarified that "limited pruning" by the City should be eliminated as a possible incentive because it would overburden the Arbor Division workload. The Commission also discussed the installation of a plaque next to each tree as a participation incentive, and the possibility of garnering private or corporate sponsorships to help offset the cost of the plaques.

Brunk discussed a news article that had been forwarded to Commission members by Roberts. The topic of the article was new software which can allow an economic value to be assigned to trees during the inventory process. Brunk said a program called "iTree" can be utilized during Urbana's tree inventory to determine a value for each tree.

Legacy Tree Program Update

Brunk gave an update on the Legacy Tree Program. He said it had been determined that it will cost approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year to fund the program if plaques are installed on all Legacy trees.

Brunk distributed a draft of the Legacy Tree nomination form and a draft of the Legacy Tree evaluation form (to be used in evaluating each nominated tree). Commission members discussed the design, wording, and efficacy of each form.

The Commission also discussed an informational Legacy Tree Program poster and public input survey that will be made available in order to collect public feedback on the program draft. The flier and survey link can be found at www.urbanainline.us/legacytrees. Brunk said Commission members were welcome to complete the survey and encouraged them to tell others about it.

Former Business

There was no former business to discuss.

New Business

Berlocher suggested that, whenever the City removes a particularly large tree, a ring count be performed to more accurately determine its age. Brunk suggested a list of stumps could be provided to Berlocher's class on campus each season for ring counting, and said that the tree inventory was set up with a data field to record the information from the ring counts. Berlocher also suggested collecting tree cookies from removals for later examination. Brunk stated he would consider the idea but that it may not be possible as it would cost additional money for contract removals and space would need to be allocated for storage.

Dawson said that Berlocher had recently given a presentation on the historical ecology of Champaign County, and suggested that he give that presentation to the Tree Commission at a future meeting.

Commission members discussed holding a special meeting in the summer to follow up on the Legacy Tree program. That meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Femi Washington, Recording Secretary
Tree Commission