

Urbana Tree
Commission

Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: Public Works Engineering Conference Room, 706 Glover Avenue, Urbana, IL

Members Present: Carol Augspurger (Chair), Stewart Berlocher, Jackson Bird, Michael Stevenson (Vice-Chair)

Staff Present: Michael Brunk (City of Urbana Arborist)

Members Absent: Derek Liebert (Urbana Park District)

Others Present: None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Jackson Bird moved to approve the minutes for the June 5, 2017 meeting. Michael Stevenson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Public Input

There was no public input.

Former Business

a. 1004 S Lincoln Bur Oak Removal

Brunk updated the Commission on the status of the removal of the 1004 S Lincoln Burr Oak. The removal occurred on Saturday, June 10, as an emergency tree removal. There were no issues closing Lincoln Avenue during the removal and it was completed before noon on that day.

b. EAB update

Brunk reported that there are only 74 Parkway Ash trees left from over 500 trees 3 years ago. He added that of those 74, 9 are listed for removal, 41 have been treated, 23 by residents and 18 by the City, leaving 24 standing ash trees that are not treated or listed for removal. Brunk noted that the City estimates there are as many as 500 ash trees on private property. The Arbor Division is actively seeking to inform and educate these tree owners on their options. In addition the Arbor Division sought out owners of healthy ash trees to offer a one-time treatment to assist residents in preserving the tree and prolonging necessary removal.

New Business

a. Legacy Tree Delisting – 1303 Cunningham

Brunk discussed a delisting application of a legacy tree at 1303 Cunningham and stated that he posted a delisting notice at the property for three (3) weeks. Brunk stated the posting was required by ordinance to solicit public input. Any public input and Tree Commission comments would be reflected in the minutes and forwarded to the developer of the property for information and consideration. Brunk went on to state that the Tree Commission had no authority to decline a delisting permit request.

b. USDA Tree Planting Grant Award

Brunk stated that the Morton Arboretum reported 29 Illinois Communities took advantage of the 2017 USDA tree planting grant. He reported that City staff not only applied for the grant for Urbana but also assisted the Village of Sadorus with the grant application effort. Brunk explained Urbana currently has 464 stumps and 171 listed tree removals, which creates 635 new tree planting sites. Brunk went on to say the City has been averaging around 125 new tree plantings per year and the forestry crew averages 100 removals a year. He stated that if the City could up tree planting to 225 per year that the 635 planting site backlog could be addressed in about five years. The USDA grant award of \$15,000 would help plant 297 trees for this fiscal year. Brunk shared his thought that the City should set a goal of planting no less than two trees, preferably three in times of loss, for every one tree removed and that such a goal would not only help fill a present need but if maintained would help insulate the city from future tree loss.

c. Fall tree planting

Brunk gave an update on the new tree selection for Fall 2017/Spring 2018. He noted that the planting list has no one species over 5% of all species and the highest genus “Quercus”/Oak s was at 10.29. In addition, Brunk stated that arbor staff planted 100 trees in the fall 2017 and that 197 new trees are scheduled to be planted in the spring. Brunk reported that there was a tree planting contribution in the works by the Urbana Rotary Club which would cover a percentage of the spring 2018 plantings.

d. New Tree Spacing

Brunk reported the idea of changing tree spacing requirements to slow directional growth over streets and homes. Brunk stated that the idea is based on observations and discussions with urban forestry colleagues. The thought is that crowded trees tend to shoot growth towards open areas which in parkway trees are over streets and towards homes. Urbana's minimum tree spacing between trees is presently set at 40 feet for large trees, 30 feet for medium trees and 20 feet for small trees. Brunk suggested this spacing be changed to 50 feet minimum for large trees, 40 feet for medium sized trees and 25 feet for small sized trees. Brunk suggested that the extra space between trees would help slow the directional growth over streets and towards homes and possibly help to reduce maintenance liabilities. Brunk wasn't looking for commission direction today but suggested that it be thought about and brought back for a possible decision in the near future.

e. 2018 Tree Commission Meetings

The commission unanimously voice voted to add the following 2018 Tree Commission Meeting dates at Urbana Public Works:

Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 5, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Leslie P. Cross, Recording Secretary
Urbana Tree Commission