

City of Whitewater
Urban Forestry Commission
Tuesday September 23, 2014

Meeting called to order by Karen Coburn

Roll call: Karen Coburn, Karen McCulloch, Tiu Gray-Fow, Bev Stone, Brandon Knedler, Sherry Stanek

Staff: Chuck Nass

Approval of Agenda: Karen McCulloch moved to approve agenda with the following changes, -Denay Trykowski will speak later (about Indian Mounds Park) in the meeting and -Chuck Nass will go first; Bev Stone seconded; Unanimous approval

No minutes available for July; there was no UFC meeting in August

Considerations:

Bird City Wisconsin report by Karen Coburn. Bird City Website has features specifically for Whitewater and is well worth checking out. Sherry mentioned that there is a direct link to Urban Forestry on the Whitewater Banner that also links to Bird City.

Criteria was discussed for continued Bird City membership – 3 items from Category 1 and 1 item from each of four remaining categories.

Karen McCulloch wants to recognize International Migratory Bird Day and to have Cameron Clapper read proclamation to make it official.

Chuck Nass suggested that to meet Bird City criteria, we should:

- 1st year: Plant fruit bearing trees
- 2nd year: Count arriving birds in the spring
- 3rd year: Count birds as they leave or pass through in the fall

Karen Coburn stated that she would like to see the UFC disseminate more information to the public on the threats of cats to urban birds. Karen McCulloch added that we should promote Catios. Tiu would like to see humans take responsibility for their pet cats to lessen the harm that they do to birds.

The Great Backyard Bird Count in Janesville would be a great resource for us when we decide to proceed with bird counts in Whitewater. Karen M. said that it's structured so that kids and adults can participate in their own backyards and that it does not require a huge time commitment. A high school Biology teacher started this to engage "citizen scientists" to help with keeping track of bird populations and also to deal with identification of invasive species in Whitewater.

Karen Coburn said that she and Ginny Coburn had identified Japanese Knotweed infestations in Whitewater and had worked very hard at removal of quite a bit of it. They plan to seek help from students on this project as it requires quite a lot of strength and agility to deal with. Chuck Nass provided black garbage bags to kill it. Chuck also said city workers cut down a large growth of it and will continue to cut it down until it gives up. You cannot use herbicides near the water.

Website progress:

Karen McCulloch talked about website. City has us on our own spot on their website. Jim Stewart also has added a link to us on the Banner. Karen Coburn would like us to link UFC and Bird City together to make it easier for people to find.

"The Wild Ones" will be hosting a program on native restoration for homeowners on November 8, 2014 at 10 a.m. at the Kettle Moraine Forest Headquarters. The phone number for more information is 262-642-2352

Downtown Celebration:

Karen Coburn reported that they had a very good turnout for our Bird City exhibits as well as having many people, children and adults, assemble and decorate Bluebird Houses and Robin Perches. Karen thanked Al for his help both in bringing people to our location and to Betsy Stanek for woodburning the names of the people who decorated the houses into the bottoms of each house. Karen said that she still needs the steel poles that will be used to mount the houses to be cut down to 6 1/2' tall. Jerry Shane will also make and donate 20 Bluebird houses.

Information was passed out regarding hazards to birds and how to create a bird friendly yard as well as our Bird City pamphlet.

Library Display:

Karen Coburn will be working to put together a display in the library windows which will be on view for the month of November. Sherry will collect nests that she finds and all members are encouraged to think about what they would like to see displayed.

Board Reports:

Karen Coburn – It is difficult to have much say in upcoming projects in the city, other than advising on landscape plans and invasive plant species. It's hard to arrange for a UFC meeting ahead of Plan Commission meetings where these things are considered and discussed. Tiiu said that we should monitor upcoming Plan Commission agendas so that we can offer guidance. She said we should think about how we can maintain that linkage between committees.

Karen asked Sherry to talk about her hopes of Whitewater establishing a Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden. Sherry said that she and Chuck already plan to incorporate more perennials into WW landscape and that we could certainly consider those plants with regard to Hummingbirds and Monarch Butterflies all around the city as well as establishing a specific H and B garden.

Brandon Knedler – Park Board will be sending two trail sections to UFC for review. Members should walk through these sections and give ideas for plantings.

On October 14th at its regular meeting, the Park Board has invited the UFC to give input into the future of Cravath Lake Park's plantings. UFC members will meet prior to this meeting to discuss the current trees and to consider future plantings. Interested parties from the city will share their ideas for the future use of the park and people will be allowed to speak for a prescribed number of minutes so that all can be heard.

Tour of Parks – Brandon encouraged UFC members to go see park trails and note their thoughts to share at a later meeting.

Staff Report:

City Forester Nass reported that Downtown Whitewater supports our plan to add eight planters on Main St., two on each city block on each side of the street. In between these planters, individual trees will be planted and surrounded by decorative iron guards that will tie in with the eight raised/fenced planters. These planters will hold trees and other shrubs/plants. They will not hinder parked cars door opening. The existing flower planters (caskets) will be moved from Main to Center St. to provide some much needed color and life to that street. Chuck passed out lists of approved trees that would work well in the urban streetscape. Karen Coburn asked if we would be planting the same trees to achieve a uniform look downtown. Chuck said that they didn't want to do this because if a tree disease shows up, we would lose them all. Karen asked if we could put two in a row and then two others and so on. Chuck said he had it

all worked out. Sherry moved that we approve Chuck's plan, Karen McCulloch seconded to go to Park Board for consideration. Passed unanimously.

Indian Mounds Park:

Denay said that there would be a park tour of the Mounds Park at 10 a.m. on October 10, 2014.

Denay gave a detailed presentation on our need to plant native plantings at this park, and ephemerals and cultivars of natives. Mariette Nowak will lead a tour at Denay Trykowski's the 2nd Saturday in May, May 9th. They would like members of the UFC to come.

Denay reported on her work at the Indian Mound Park sign. Maggie Zoellner is part of the Kettle Moraine Land Trust and would like to see us work to preserve and enhance the Oak Savannah at the park. Karen Coburn feels that Denay is the most knowledgeable about Indian Mounds Park. Denay is concerned about mowing cutting down saplings in the savannah. Tom Barns started this and Chuck is trained on oak savannahs and mowing. Denay asked how the city decides when to mow. She wondered what should be done when and how to communicate better with city crews. Should the city have a contact person specifically for this? Denay recommended that saplings be protected from mowers. She would like guidelines specified for what should be pulled and where work should be done and by whom.

Denay believes that we should consult with an authority to get guidance on managing our savannah. Denay said that Matt Amundson has said that it is a "gem" that few cities have and that we need to work hard to preserve and enhance it.

Is Whitewater still pursuing a tech plan so that people could easily find the mounds and other areas of interest in our city? Denay reported that there was an article published in Walworth County Sunday on 8/31/14 regarding the maintenance of effigy mounds. Dr. George Cloaky at UWW has students that could be interested in this project.

Adjournment:

Tiiu moved to adjourn; Brandon seconded.

Next meeting: October 28, 2014 at 4:30 in City Manager's conference room

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Stanek