

City of Whitewater Urban Forestry
Commission January 27, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order by Karen Coburn, Chair

Roll Call: Karen Coburn, Karen McCulloch, Tiiu Gray-Fow, Brandon Knedler, Ann Zarinnia, Beverly Stone, Sherry Stanek

Staff: Chuck Nass, City Forester

Guest: Liesl Schultz Huing and Denay Trykowski

Approval of Agenda: Gray-Fow moved to approve; Stanek seconded; unanimous approval

Approval of December 2014 minutes: Gray-Fow moved to approve; Knedler seconded; unanimous approval

Staff Report: Nass reported that staff is continuing to prune small trees in the city. Trees south of Main St. are done. The City will be doing trees north of Main St. next. Nass reminded UFC members that he can send letters to homeowners who have hazardous trees on their property, requiring them to be removed. He distributed several that were just mailed out. If members see trees in the city that are a problem, please let him know. City will be replacing trees instead of new plantings, including some new varieties on Main St. McCulloch asked what percentage of the trees to be planted will be native species. Guest Denay asked what trees are to be planted at the Senior Center. Nass told her that this was a decision made by the Park Board.

Nass has heard negative comments on our first watershed planter on Main St. that is located in front of Bergey Jewelry. Downtown Inc. told him that they think the planters are too large. He reported that he has been all over the state researching these planters and that ours are consistent with others. Zarinnia asked who is in charge of the sidewalk/terrace area on Main St. Stanek suggested that because they are new and different, they are drawing criticism, but once they're all in and established, people will see their value. Members are encouraged to support this project when possible with downtown business owners.

Bird City/Bird Talk: Coburn talked about the proposed Swift Night Out. Especially since the Chimney Swift is our bird of the year for 2015, it was decided to assemble a committee of interested people to organize and fund raise an effort to build Swift towers in Whitewater. The Swift Tower Committee has been meeting to discuss plans for the towers. The birds arrive in April and leave in September. The Swift Night Out event is recommended for September, to observe the Chimney Swifts during their migration and to generate interest in building future towers. If not the fall of 2015, we will hold it in the spring of 2016. Nass mentioned several

sites that are near water retention ponds. Stone suggested James St. and Zarinnia suggested that we check into seeing if the high school could be interested in building them. Coburn liked that suggestion. McCulloch said Swift Night Out would satisfy bird count criteria and stated that we need several towers. Next Swift Tower Comm. meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2015 at 10 a.m. at city hall. Scott Weberpal had mentioned sites at Cravath Lakefront Park during his presentation on the swifts. Everything will go through the Park Board before anything is decided.

Scott Weberpal will be doing another presentation on February 17, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the library. Gray-Fow and Stanek will help Coburn set up at 6 p.m. prior to the program. We will serve hot cider.

Coburn reported that Maggie Zoellner will be coming to our March meeting and will be doing a presentation on land grants. A presentation on seed libraries will be at the city library in March. Richard Ehrenberg and Wild Ones will bring seeds to be checked out.

Coburn said Janesville has already had a bird count and is also a bird city. She asked McCulloch if she has talked with them? McCulloch said not yet. Zarinnia will contact the schools (Petra Vandengand is the Biology/Botany teacher at high school) about blue bird houses being placed on school grounds. Zarinnia and McCulloch will meet to talk about this. Guest Liesl offered to contact the sustainability guy at UWW to see if there are places to mount some of the blue bird houses on campus. Once the houses are installed in the community, the people who decorated them will be contacted to inform them of the locations of the boxes they worked on.

There was discussion of the city's website and its current scattered condition. Gray-Fow said that it is somewhat better than it was last month. Coburn asked McCulloch about a Bird City Facebook page. McCulloch and Zarinnia will meet to discuss this.

Plan Commission Report: Stanek had no report

Parks & Recreation Board Report: Knedler reported that trail walks can be scheduled when the weather is warmer. There was no update on the Effigy Mounds. Knedler said he will inform the Park Board of the UFC's views on the tree situation at Cravath Lakefront Park after there was much discussion on this topic. The UFC serves in an advisory function to the Park Board. Gray-Fow brought up the Park Board's proposal to move two oak trees located to the west of the stairs in the middle of the park. Knedler stated that it is the desire of the Park Board to maintain open spaces and that they consider Cravath an Event Park primarily, with consideration especially for the Fourth of July celebration. After a very lengthy discussion, Nass suggested that the UFC take a vote on the relocation of the two oak trees in question and have Coburn take it to the Park Board at their next meeting to let them know how strongly UFC members feel about this proposal. Stanek asked Knedler if Park Board would consider

locating the beer tent at Cravath in the covered pavilion area near the stage instead of in the large tent as it has been in previous years. Vote passed unanimously.

Guest Trykowski spoke about Effigy Mounds and her concerns regarding a downed tree that had been removed and also about tire tracks in the area. She recommends that downed trees be left in place as a natural element there. Nass said that if they are hazardous, they must be removed. Safety has to be first priority. Trykowski said that Matt Amundson would like to investigate getting a manager specifically for the Effigy Mounds and that she had given him resources. Stanek said that there must be grant money out there for this purpose? Trykowski wondered if Landmark Commission or some other entity would take charge of the mounds. She reminded us that it is not a park but a preserve. Nass said he will look into what happened with the downed tree. If it is a hazard it will have to be removed, if not, it will stay. Nass reminded everyone that prairie flower seeds from UWW had been planted at the Mounds but that it will take several years to see the result in full.

Coburn will request a future presentation by Nass on trees for our meeting.

Stone moved that meeting be adjourned; Gray-Fow seconded; unanimously approved.

Coburn adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: February 24, 2015 in Cravath Room at City Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Stanek