

City of Whitewater
Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2016

Call to order:

Roll call: Present: Anne Zarinnia, Jerry Schoen, Brandon Knedler, Karen McCulloch, Sherry Stanek, Karen Coburn. Absent: Teri Smith.

Staff: Andy Beckman

Approval of Agenda: Moved to approve by Zarinnia, second by Knedler: motion carried.

Approval of November 2015 Minutes: Moved to approve with corrections by Zarinnia, second by Schoen: Motion carried.

Staff Report: Remaining downtown trees have been removed. Small trees are being pruned, and remaining pruning will begin next month. Other: George St. project approved with no changes.

Bird City/Bird Talk:

Karen Coburn presented a UFC yearly report to the City Manager, Cameron Clapper. The Seed Library is progressing. Seeds are available for pick-up at the city library. An upcoming program at the city library on February 1st, Prairie Bob presenting a talk on native seeds and native plantings, is jointly sponsored by Friends of Effigy Mounds and the UFC. A citywide Bird Count was suggested, possibly to tie-in with other bird counts in area. There is a nationwide Backyard Bird Count on February 15th. It was suggested that we do our own later. A motion made to nominate the woodpecker species as our Bird of The Year by McCulloch, seconded by Stone, motion carried. Zarinnia proposed that we do a Christmas bird count next year. Coburn suggested that we do one in summer also. Will discuss at future meeting.

Clay Street Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden Report:

Zarinnia asked if the ad hoc committee had investigated how wind affects butterflies. Stanek said it hadn't been discussed at meetings, but they will and report back. Knedler said that the Park Board would probably be supportive with the plan as long as there are volunteers, involved because it is not on the list of parks to be developed this year. Coburn explained that the subcommittee is made up of several amazingly well informed gardeners who are anxious to volunteer on this project. Trykowski, a member of the ad hoc group, urged us to remember to plant things that are pollinator friendly too. Coburn and Stanek will give a preliminary report to Park Board at their February 2016 meeting.

Tree City/Heritage Tree Report:

The Ad Hoc committee has found that there are many benefits from having trees in a city. Zarinnia went over the Fitchburg Survey and explained its purpose and process. Knedler asked

what was the best way to get clear answers to survey questions. He proposed that we include Champion Tree Nomination instructions with survey to reach the most people and to encourage the public to nominate trees that they have, or have seen in Whitewater. Once this is done, walking tree tours can be conducted in the future as a public activity. Stanek mentioned that this could be a good scavenger hunt activity for The Main Street Festival. Zarinnia also talked about the importance of planting trees that provide habitats for birds, insects and animals. She will take our suggestions and questions back to the ad hoc group. She also hopes to finalize the tree survey. Zarinnia will contact the Whitewater Banner to start disseminating information to the community ahead of the tree survey which will be offered both on paper and electronically.

Plan Board Report:

Stanek reported that Chuck Nass had made a presentation on the city's Landscape Guidelines at the January Plan Board meeting. He explained the point system for planting and also the importance of properly protecting areas near driveways to prevent mud and silt runoff into storm sewers. He mentioned the Prince and Main St. development that required the removal of several large trees and proposed that in a case like that, where there isn't enough space to replace existing trees that must be removed, that the developer be asked to put money into a Forestry fund to pay to have those replacement trees planted elsewhere in the city. Doing so would enable the city to maintain our tree numbers. Plan Board members would like the UFC to revisit the guidelines and update them with an accent on simplifying them. The UFC will review them soon and send suggestions back to the Plan Commission.

Park and Rec Board Report:

Knedler reported that the Park Board would like plans and proposals from the UFC on the three parks they plan to consider this summer, beginning with Minnieska. Coburn said that she would like a complete list of parks to be visited with notes from the Park Board on what they have in mind for each so that we can work more effectively together. Knedler agreed to provide a complete list. Stanek said that UFC visited Minnieska, Skyway, and Flat Iron Parks last year at the end of our meetings. Coburn asked that members visit the parks on their own and then bring their ideas to the next meeting where the park will be discussed. It was agreed that this was probably a more efficient method. We will visit Minneiska this month and discuss possibilities at our February meeting.

Effigy Mound Update:

A reminder was given that next Monday, February 1st a program at the library on native plants and native seed planting will be given by Prairie Bob.

Zarinnia moved to adjourn, Stanek seconded, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bev Stone, Acting Secretary & Sherry Stanek, Secretary

Next Meeting: February 23, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.