

**City of Whitewater  
Urban Forestry Commission Meeting  
Monday, October 24, 2016 Minutes**

**Call to Order:** 4:30 p.m. by Chair Coburn

**Roll Call:** Karen Coburn, Jerry Schoen, Nick Alt, Brandon Knedler, Rose Mary Leaver , Sherry Stanek, Chuck Nass, staff

Absent: Anne Zarinnia, Karen McCulloch

Guest: Pat Blackmer

**Approval of Agenda:** Stanek moved approval of agenda, Leaver 2nd, unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** Leaver moved approval of September meeting minutes, Alt 2nd, unanimously approved.

**Staff Report:** All is planted for this year, pruning and trimming will start when trees are dormant in late winter/early spring. All construction has been completed. More trees will be planted on Center Street next year. Downtown Arboretum signs will be put in place spring of 2017.

Walton Oaks Park - Wes Enterline of UWW Sustainability called Nass and went over some things that could be done at park once problems with encroachment are resolved. He would like to teach his students there, with them working on cleaning up invasives, marking all oaks and determining which can stay and which should be removed to protect the woodland from becoming a forest. Removed oaks will be planted on city terraces or at the Marshall Farm for replanting in the city at a later date when they are larger. Once oaks are marked and invasives are removed, prescribed burns will begin to clear the understory like it used to be so that natives can grow there again. Wes is collecting prairie seeds with his students and is interested in potentially reseeding WO with them. The viability of this will be determined at a later date. Coburn cautioned that only seed indigenous to this oak stand should be planted.

City staff are drafting a letter instructing encroaching neighbors to remove plants and other materials from the park. A peach tree that was planted will remain for now. City Manager and Matt Amundson are handling this situation. In the meantime, we are to wait before beginning work on the park.

**Guest Pat Blackmer, Whitewater Landmarks Commission** Chair informed UFC that the Landmarks Comm. has been working to nominate Walton Oaks as a local landmark. It is a unique site and excellent example of an oak stand remnant. These used to cover much of this area and are now very rare and must be preserved and protected. Pat

Blackmer explained that local statutes are much stronger than state or federal ones. The process involves the nomination followed by a public hearing and then will move on to the Common Council. It is very important that only plants that are appropriate for this ecosystem be planted at this site. Coburn thanked Blackmer for coming. Nomination will be presented at Landmarks Commission's November meeting.

**Bird City/Bird Talk:** Coburn presented the beautiful poster that is being used at Lincs Elementary for students there to vote to choose the 2017 Bird of The Year and all is going well in this effort. Their choice will be announced at November UFC meeting. There were 54 native plants planted at the Clay Street butterfly/hummingbird garden by volunteers. Stanek will create identification signs over the winter which will be placed in spring 2017 to identify each type of plant with Nass approval.

**Tree City/Tree Talk:** Alt went to Skyway Park and diagramed all the trees planted there in great detail. This will be revisited at November meeting. The Starin Park Neighborhood group would like to create an arboretum at Starin Park, by labeling many of the existing trees and possible having new varieties added in the future to build on what is already there. Leaver will find out more and bring it back to November UFC meeting.

Walking/bike paths along Starin Road and the Starin Park Spur were visited and discussed by members for needs/improvements to make them more user friendly. Stanek suggested that benches and shade trees be provided at intervals along these paths where they do not already have them to provide resting places for users. Nass said there is a formula for how frequently benches should be placed.

Tree surveys continue to be filled out around town and collected.

Coburn presented beautiful Forest Trees of Wisconsin posters to UFC members that she obtained from WI DNR.

**Park & Recreation Report:** Knedler reported that he talked to First Citizens about opening an account for the Underwood donation. He needs an EIN# to open a checking account. They do charge fees. Nass suggested that the bank be contacted and request that fees be waived since we are a non-profit entity. The checking account should require checks to be signed by both the UFC chair and treasurer. This will be on the agenda for November UFC meeting.

**Plan Commission Report:** Stanek reported that she and Coburn had gone to Summit Dental to review what they had planted in their landscape after having been reviewed by UFC. They planted the plants recommended by the UFC instead of proposed invasives, which was considered a big success. Stanek will request that this topic be placed on the agenda for the next Plan Commission meeting.

**UFC Treasury:** Coburn read a letter from Peter Underwood to the UFC regarding his honey stand that he keeps in town and the sale of honey produced at the City Market. He has donated \$760.00 toward the Chimney Swift Tower project from proceeds from his honey sales for the year! He instructs the money to be used for Bird City projects, and also reports that 60% of honey bees were lost in 2015 in Wisconsin. Information on these vital pollinators is absolutely needed and he would like to see this money go toward informing citizens about the importance of bird and pollinator habitat. Coburn will send a thank you for this incredibly generous gift.

Future fundraising suggestions were discussed including possible selling of sunflower heads or bird house kits? Alt offered to donate honey for sale with proceeds to go to UFC. More discussion will follow.

Coburn reminded members that the WI DNR was presenting a program on invasive species that evening at City Hall at 6:30 p.m. and encouraged those who could attend to do so.

Coburn announced that a Winter City Market will be held at the armory.

Schoen moved that meeting be adjourned, Alt 2nd, unanimously approved.

**Next meeting:** will be held on November 28th, 2016 at City Hall, 2nd floor City Manager's Conference Room, 312 Whitewater St.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Stanek, Secretary