

**City of Whitewater
Urban Forestry Commission Meeting
Monday, September 26, 2016 Minutes**

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 4:31 pm

Roll Call: Karen Coburn, Brandon Knedler, Rose Mary Leaver, Sherry Stanek; Chuck Nass, staff, Nick Alt, guest

Absent: Jerry Schoen, Anne Zarinnia, Karen McCulloch

Approval of Minutes: Knedler moved approval of August 22, 2016 minutes, Stanek seconded, unanimously approved.

Alternate Update: Coburn reported that since the applicant for UFC alternate, Nick Alt is not a city resident, council must approve him. Knedler reported that he has kids in the school district and that even though he lives out of the city limits, that allows him to serve. Alt's wife teaches in the WUSD so that may resolve this.

Staff Report: Forester Chuck Nass reported that three trees were planted at Cravath and only two survived. The third will be replaced next spring. Coburn requested that the replacement tree be planted in the center of the area rather than on the edge to increase shade. Nass said they would do that. Also, the fence has been completed at Cravath on either side of railroad tracks to protect residents at park.

Nass reported that Clay Street Nature Park lakefront will be cleared of scrubs so that lake can be seen. Coburn should alert the neighbor that natives and tree stumps should be removed prior to this if they would like to save them. He added that split rail fence and posts will be added at corners and boundaries of this and some other parks in the near future to delineate park boundaries so that neighbors of parks and city residents can clearly see where the parks are.

Construction is complete on Center and George Streets. Some planting at the George Street site will be completed spring of 2017.

The City of Whitewater currently has 4,209 trees planted on city terraces. Coburn asked how much earth/grass planting area is required for a terrace tree to survive and thrive. Nass said 6' - 8' for a large tree and no less than 4' for a small tree. Leaver asked who is responsible for taking down dead trees. Nass answered that trees within the terrace area are removed by city staff, trees on private property are taken down by property owner.

Knedler asked what construction projects are planned for 2017. Nass answered that Esterly and Bishop Streets will be done in 2017 in order for there to be streets to absorb the traffic that will be detoured from Clay St. in 2018.

Ash tree update: There are currently 96 dead ash trees in the city, but that number will undoubtedly go up as Emerald Ash borer affected trees continue to decline and die. It will take at least a couple of years to get these trees taken down. The 250 city Ash trees that are being treated for Emerald Ash borer are showing no signs of disease at this time. They are treated every three years, spring of 2016 being the second treatment. This is very good news!

2017 Tree order is being prepared now. Coburn requested that some native trees that are not common in Whitewater be included in the order for possible planting in the future arboretum at Starin Park.

Nass will ask Andy Beckman for the list of downtown street trees given to him at August meeting so that signs can be ordered.

Bird City/Bird Talk: Leaver reported that the birds that elementary kids will be choosing from for 2017 Bird of The Year includes, American Goldfinch, Black Capped Chickadee, Baltimore Oriole, Rose Breasted Hummingbird, Snowy Owl and Mourning Dove. Nass asked if we should switch Mourning Dove with something else because people hunt those and it could make people uncomfortable and members agreed and decided to substitute the Nuthatch instead. A poster will be prepared and kids will choose from this.

Main Street Festival: Coburn reported that the UFC table had lots of traffic and many interested residents visit our exhibits, many who collected lots of handouts and asked many questions about birds and trees in our city.

Clay Street Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden: Stanek reported that beds are prepared and mulched. Weather has been way too hot for planting much of the summer and now, after Whitewater received many inches of rain, is now too wet for planting! We will continue to monitor the weather so we can hopefully get the plants in the ground very soon.

Tree City/Tree Talk: Walton Oaks Park: Coburn reported that the Park and Rec. Board met and listened to the encroaching neighbor's presentation on park. Some neighbors would like to sit down with UFC and figure out how they can help maintain the park and we welcome them! Nass reported that invasives and scrubs will be cut out of the park by staff first before volunteers are invited to help. It will probably take two days. All oaks will be marked and then evaluated. Those that will survive there will be left, those that will not will be removed and planted elsewhere in the city so that the forest floor can receive necessary sunshine so that natives can once again thrive. Once the park is returned to good condition, volunteers could be trained to help.

Skyway Park: Guest (and proposed alternate) Nick Alt reported that he had walked Skyway Park and identified all of the trees. He reported that Swamp White Oaks, River Birch and Bald Cypress would do well there since it is a very wet location most of the time. There are also periods of hot and dry conditions which make it a really tough place for many trees to thrive.

Starin Park Spur Walking and Bike Trails: Park and Rec. Board would like us to visit these trails and suggest areas where benches or shade trees would be beneficial.

Plan Board: Stanek had no report.

Park & Recreation Board Report: Knedler reported that it was a very long meeting with much attention to Walton Oaks Park and was very well attended. City staff will manage the resolution of the encroachment into the park by neighboring property. Two boundary posts have been planted on one side of the park.

UFC Treasury Report: Coburn reported that Peter Underwood wants to make a donation to UFC from the proceeds of his honey sales from City Market this summer. He originally wanted it to go to Swift Tower project but that project has been completed and funded fully as well as the sign explaining it. He would like this donation to go toward future projects by the UFC and with Nass' recommendation, Knedler will go to the bank to learn the best way to set up an account similar to the Birge Fountain account where two people will be required for access. Nass suggested that UFC consider fundraising in the future also to raise money for future projects such as when we made bluebird house kits that were given to children for decoration, to instead charge a nominal amount for them, say \$5. Another idea discussed was sale of birdseed. Possible winter City Market could be a possible place for us to do this.

Future Topics: No suggestions.

Adjournment: Knedler moved for adjournment, Leaver seconded, unanimously approved and meeting adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Next Meeting: October 24, 2016 at 4:30 pm in Cravath Lakefront Room, 2nd floor, City Municipal Building.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherry Stanek, Secretary