

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
UNIVERSITY CITY, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020**

Agenda Item #1: Call Meeting to Order

Forestry Commission President Kristin Sobatka called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Those in attendance included Commission President Kristin Sobatka, Commission Vice-President Barbara Chicherio, Commission Members Dianne Benjamin, David Rowan, and Malik Johnson. Also in attendance was Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Darren Dunkle, and Forestry Supervisor Jacob Kaiser. Absent were Commission Liaison Aleta Klein and Commission Member Mary Harvey.

Mr. Malik Johnson of Ward 3 was introduced as a new member of the Commission. Mr. Dunkle stated that Ms. Aleta Klein would be the new Council Liaison, however, she was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Commission Member Chicherio motioned and Commission Member Rowan seconded to approve the agenda with no changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #4: Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Chicherio motioned and Commission Member Rowan seconded to approve the minutes of January 8, 2020 with no changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #5: Citizens' Comments

None

Agenda Item #6: Department Report – Jacob Kaiser reported the following:

- 1) Conducting weekly safety meetings with staff.
- 2) The contractor for the removal of Ash trees went to Omni Tree and all work has been completed.
- 3) The contractor for tree trimming went to Gamma Tree and all work has been completed.
- 4) Staff is performing treatment for some of the Ash trees within Heman Park (along Midland next to Jack Buck Field and by the Fountain in front of Centennial Commons). Staff is concentrating on trees located within the parks as opposed to street trees.
- 5) Staff responded to the major storm event in August. Staff removed debris from the streets and sidewalks and cleaned up debris of street trees.

Agenda Item #7: Council Liaison Report

None

Agenda Item #8: Commission Member Report

Commission Member Benjamin stated that she is working on the wording on emphasizing “natives” and has reached out to others. She also stated that there is an upcoming statewide legislation on invasive species, and that she is attending a free webinar hosted by Grow Native

on September 23, 2020 at 4:00 pm. Ms. Benjamin stated that she would email out the information.

Agenda Item #9: Unfinished Business

None

Agenda Item #10: New Business

- a) Appointment of Commission Secretary – Mr. Dunkle stated that with the resignation of Ms. Teixeira, the Commission would need to elect a new Secretary. The Commission decided that due to the fact that there was only one meeting left before January, they would wait until the January meeting.
- b) Council Study Session – Mr. Dunkle reported that the City Council would be hosting a Study Session on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 5:30 pm to discuss the Forestry appeal Process/Tree Removal.

Commission members stated that it was very concerning and undermines staff and Commission to make such changes to the appeal process, as the Commission has so little authority anyway. It was suggested that Commission members contact their Council liaison/members of their ward to let them know their opinion on the issue, and that they would like to be involved in the discussion.

Mr. Dunkle stated that he would ask and see if members of the Commission would be included in the Study Session. He further stated that he would send out an email reminder to the Commission regarding the date.

- c) Forestry Related Ordinances – Mr. Dunkle reported that in the Commission packet he attached ordinances related to the Forestry Commission. He further stated that staff was currently reviewing the existing ordinances and would be presenting some recommended changes to the ordinances at an upcoming meeting.
- d) Storm Removal Procedures – Mr. Kaiser presented the following storm removal procedures:
 - 1) Emergency situations take priority;
 - 2) Main roads (County and State are notified of issues on their streets/roads) are cleared of debris to allow traffic and emergency responders to get through;
 - 3) Secondary Streets are cleared of debris to allow traffic and emergency responders to get through;
 - 4) Residential Streets (other than Main and Secondary) are cleared of debris to allow traffic and emergency responders to get through;
 - 5) Once all streets have been cleared to allow vehicles and pedestrians to pass safely, crews will begin the process of removing debris caused by City trees (Trees within the R.O.W. tree lawn). Debris caused by private trees (Homeowners property or private subdivision) will be the responsibility of those private owners.
- e) FY21 Tree Removal Program – Mr. Kaiser reported that the City has gone out to bid for miscellaneous tree removals. This work will include single tree removals throughout the City.

- f) FY21 Tree EAB Program – Mr. Kaiser reported that the City would be going out to bid for the annual Emerald Ash Borer Tree Removal and Replacement Program. Last year the City had a budget of \$75,000, and this year’s budget was \$25,000; however, there is another \$25,000 budgeted for hazardous tree removals which could also be used for this program.
- g) FY21 Tree Trimming Program - Mr. Kaiser reported that the City would be going out to bid for the annual tree trimming program. Mr. Kaiser went on to report that last year the program included some single trees, as well as some block prunes. However, this year’s program will be all block prunes which will take place in all wards. Furthermore, Mr. Kaiser reported that the budget for FY21 had been raised to \$175,000 up from \$100,000 last year.

Agenda Item #11: Adjournment

Commission Member Chicherio motioned and Commission Member Rowan seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously.

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