

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION  
UNIVERSITY CITY, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021**

**Agenda Item #1: Call Meeting to Order**

Forestry Commission President Kristin Sobatka called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

**Agenda Item #2: Roll Call**

Those in attendance included Commission President Kristin Sobatka, Commission Members Dianne Benjamin, David Rowan, and Kathy Freese. Also in attendance was Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Darren Dunkle, Forestry Supervisor Jacob Kaiser, and Council Liaison Aleta Klein. Absent was Commission Member Malik Johnson.

Ms. Kathy Freese was introduced as a new member of the Commission. Discussion took place in regard to the structure of the Commission (i.e., terms, vacancies, etc.).

**Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda**

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

**Agenda Item #4: Approval of Minutes**

Commission Member Rowan motioned, and Commission Member Benjamin seconded to approve the minutes of September 9, 2020 with no changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Agenda Item #5: Citizens' Comments**

None.

**Agenda Item #6: Department Report** – Jacob Kaiser reported on the October, November, December, January, and February Forestry Reports.

Mr. Dunkle reported that he is working with UCity In Bloom, and the Green Center on the possibility of applying for a grant with the Missouri Department of Conservation for the removal of invasives at the Ruth Woods Park. He further stated that once more information was available, he would bring it back to the Commission.

**Agenda Item #7: Council Liaison Report** – Ms. Klein reported on the following:

- a) Police Station – Stated that a Space Needs Study was conducted, and it has been discussed by the City Council that the City Hall Annex may be renovated to house the Police Department. However, a Bond Issue would have to be approved.
- b) Costco Development – The proposed Costco Development is ready to move forward and should be brought before Council by the end of the month for approval.
- c) Harvard School – A demolition permit has been given to take down the front building. A hotel is planned to be built at the site.

**Agenda Item #9: Unfinished Business**

- a) Council Study Session – Mr. Dunkle reported that the City Council held a Study Session on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 5:30 pm to discuss the Forestry appeal Process/Tree

Removal. Mr. Dunkle further stated that a power point presentation was given and that it was well received by the Council. Both President Sobotka and Commission Member Benjamin sat in on the meeting and thought that it was very professionally handled.

- b) FY21 Tree EAB Program – Mr. Kaiser reported that the Emerald Ash Borer Tree Removal and Replacement Program had been completed.
- c) FY21 Tree Trimming Program - Mr. Kaiser reported that the annual tree trimming program would be completed in April.

#### **Agenda Item #10: New Business**

- a) T.R.I.M. Grant - Mr. Kaiser reported that the City had received the grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation to conduct a partial Tree Inventory of the Third Ward.
- b) Tree Inventory - Mr. Kaiser reported that the City had hired Davey Resource Group to conduct the Tree Inventory and that they were able to inventory about 90% of the trees in Ward Three and that he had inventoried the remaining 10%. He further stated that based on the number of trees inventoried, it is his best guess that there are approximately 15,000 public street trees within the city, however that number could not be confirmed without having a complete tree inventory of all wards.

Discussion took place as to the overall tree canopy (50-75%?) and canopy coverage is available via the I-tree software. Ruth Park Woods was not included in the inventory as large forested areas are usually not included in tree inventories.

- c) Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force – Pledge – Commission Member Benjamin reported that by invitation of the Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force (MoIP), a resource of the Missouri Prairie Foundation’s Grow Native Program, the City has been asked to take the pledge to control invasive plants and to encourage other entities to follow suit.

Commission Member Freese motioned, and Commission Member Rowan seconded to make a recommendation of support to City Council to take the pledge. The motion was approved unanimously.

- d) Acceptable Tree List – Mr. Dunkle reported that staff had reviewed the “Acceptable Trees for Planting in Parks, City-Owned Property, or Public Rights-of-Way” document and have updated the Native Plant language on page 3; and have deleted trees from the acceptable tree categories that have been recently considered invasive by the Missouri Invasive Plant Task Force (MoIP) and have placed them within the “Trees Undesirable for Planting in the City of University City” category.

Discussion took place by the Commission in regard to identifying natives on each page.

- e) Nomination of Officers
  - Kristin Sobotka was nominated and elected President.
  - Dianne Benjamin was nominated and elected Vice President.
  - Kathy Freese was nominated and elected Secretary.

### **Agenda Item #11: Commission Comments**

- a) Commission Member Benjamin stated that she appreciated the alerts about continuing education. She also stated that she had taken University of Illinois urban forestry series, and that she is now taking the Forest Relief Tree Keepers course. Commission Member Freese stated that she also took the urban forestry course and attended the Tree Keepers course a couple of years ago.
- b) It was stated that there should be an importance to a shrub layer in the environment and that Cu-de-sacs may be better served by shrubs.

### **Agenda Item #12: Adjournment**

Commission Member Freese motioned, and Commission Member Rowan seconded to adjourn at 7:14 pm. The motion was approved unanimously.

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