

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

Agenda Item A: Call Meeting to Order

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

Agenda Item B: Roll Call

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

Mr. Aaron Bitzer was introduced as a new member of the Commission.

Agenda Item C: Approval of Agenda

Commission President Kristin Sobatka motioned, and Secretary Kathy Freese, seconded to approve the agenda with no changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D: Approval of Minutes

Commission President Kristin Sobatka, and Commission Member Benjamin seconded to approve the minutes of May 12, 2021, with no changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item E: Citizens' Comments

None.

Agenda Item F: Department Report – Jacob Kaiser reported on the Forestry Reports.

- a) Discussion followed regarding the backlog of removals.
- b) Stated that most prunes were done on citizen requests.

Agenda Item G: Council Liaison Report – Ms. Klein reported on the following:

- a) Dirt is being moved and stored from the Costco development project. She further stated that the site should be pad ready by the spring of 2022 with an opening in 2022-2023.
- b) The City has moved forward with the 2040 Visioning Process.
- c) The City has received \$3 million of the \$10 million in funds for the redevelopment/improvement of the 3rd ward, and that a task force has been established to identify the improvements.
- d) The City is working on a City-Wide housing program that will begin in the 3rd ward.

Agenda Item H: Unfinished Business

- a) Invasive Species Pledge - Mr. Dunkle stated that the Green Practices Commission approved a recommendation in support of the pledge in addition to the Urban Forestry Commissions support. He further stated that these recommendations were forwarded to the City Council for their approval and that the City's pledge has been approved and completed.

Agenda Item #10: New Business

- a) Appeal – 6942 Melrose Avenue – Mr. Kaiser reported that the resident at 6942 Melrose has filed for an appeal of his decision not to remove a tree at that address. Mr. Dunkle stated that in order to file an appeal, the resident would need to identify the policy, procedure etc. that the Forestry Supervisor had incorrectly interpreted or applied and shall specify the reasons. He further stated that in this case, it didn't appear to show that this had occurred.

After discussion by the Commission, the Commission stated that it seemed that the proper procedures were followed by the Forestry Supervisor and that they found no grounds to overturn his actions.

- b) Commissions Role – Mr. Dunkle reported that members of the Commission had requested information in regard to the Forestry Related Ordinances, Policies, and their role on the Commission. As such, staff had included the Ordinance, Management Policies, and Acceptable Tree List for their review. No action by the Commission took place as this was a receive and file item.
- c) Volunteer Opportunities – Mr. Dunkle reported that members of the Commission had requested information in regard to volunteer opportunities. As such, staff had included the Volunteer Handbook, Risk Release Form, and Service Project Proposal Form. No action by the Commission took place as this was a receive and file item.
- d) Severe Storm Response Presentation – Mr. Dunkle reported that he had given a PowerPoint presentation to City Council in regard to the City's Severe Storm Response. He further stated that a Policy had also been presented and approved by Council. No action by the Commission took place as this was a receive and file item.
- e) Memorial Policy – Mr. Dunkle reported that the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department over the years have received request for the placement of memorials within the Park System. Although the City has honored these requests a formal policy nor standards have ever been put into place. Accordingly, staff has developed a draft of policies and procedures for the acceptance of these tributes. This will provide a more standardization of the memorial process.

Discussion by the Commission took place in regard to the title of "Memorial" and that the scope should be broader, and that new language should be considered to accomplish this. The Commission took no action on the item and requested that it be placed back on the agenda in January for further discussion.

Agenda Item J: Commission Comments

- a) Commission President Kristin Sobatka stated that she didn't understand St. Louis County's policy or view on not replacing or planting trees within their tree lawn/rights-of-way. She further stated that it would be nice if a letter could be sent to St. Louis County by municipalities within the Tree City USA program that have county roads and tree lawns within their cities.

- b) Mr. Dunkle announced that the Missouri Green Industry Conference (MoGIC) would be hosting their annual conference at the St. Charles Convention Center on December 1st.

Agenda Item #12: Adjournment

Commission President Kristin Sobatka motioned, and Secretary Kathy Freese seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:46 p.m.