

Muncie Urban Forestry Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

Opening

The regular meeting of the Muncie Urban Forestry Committee was called to order at 1:00 on November 15, 2023. The meeting took place in the Mayor's Conference Room.

Present

Voting members: Adam Berland, Malcolm Cairns, James Edwards, Ruby Morris, Austin Weiland, Rick Zeigler

Non-voting attendees: Kellie McClellan, Chris Meadows

Public comments: None

Approval of minutes: Minutes from the September meeting were approved.

Urban Forester Report

- Lots of Parks work this month
- Reset light timers at parks
- Winterizing work
- Fix furnaces in preparation for winter
- Removed pears at Mulberry and Jackson, ground out stumps, and replaced with Apollo sugar maples in 5x10' pits
- Emergency tree work at Beech Grove Cemetery
- Contracted a removal in front of a new CityView Home
- Marked utilities on College Ave with a plan to plant about 15 trees

Committee Chair Updates

- Malcolm noted that last month's Urban Forester report showed a very busy month, but it did not include any tree planting.
- Malcolm provided a summary of street tree planting progress in the past year or so, highlighting successful projects in East Central/Gilbert and Riverside/Normal City as well as opportunities in other parts of the city.
 - It was noted that 2-3 trees have been planted on many of the 61 scattered Cityview Homes properties.

New Business

- Rooted in Community Grant
 - We discussed lingering questions about the administration of the grant.
 - The Committee stressed the importance of transparency regarding who is leading the grant's administration, and what programming will be conducted under the scope of the grant.
 - The Committee voiced its demand to be kept informed of grant activities and updates. The grant proposal specifies that the Urban Forestry Committee will be updated monthly by representatives from the grant-funded urban forestry and naturalist teams.
 - The Committee recommends that an executive urban forester be hired to focus on administering the grant to assign clear responsibility for planning and management of grant activities.
 - The Committee expressed concern that the urban forestry personnel to be hired through the grant will be paid substantially more than the current City Urban Forester and Assistant Urban Forester.
- Urban Forestry Committee Membership Review and Revision
 - We discussed the relative merits of having at-large members who represent City government vs. members who do not work for the City.
 - It was noted that a Streets representative with decision-making authority would be a better fit for the committee.
 - Committee members who do not attend meetings regularly or at all should be replaced, per the Committee's guidelines.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm by Malcolm Cairns. The next general meeting will be at 1:00 on December 20.

Minutes submitted by: Adam Berland