



CITY OF PEORIA – PEORIA URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY BOARD

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Matt Freeman, Michael Wilkins, Mike Price, Amy McLaren, Randy Swenson, Doug McCarty – 6

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ella Maxwell, Brian Probst – 2

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

Freeman announced the park district recently celebrated their 100th tree planted for the year of 2023. It was planted in the upper section of Laura Bradley Park in the Corn Stock Theatre area. He said their goal for the year was to plant 75 trees, so 100 is a proud milestone.

Price mentioned Mike Moss, who is currently the vegetation supervisor, is going to be retiring in June, so Price will be sending information on the new hire once they are selected.

MINUTES

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE PUFAB

September 5, 2023, Minutes

Freeman motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Price; approved with a unanimous verbal vote.

AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO. 1 Discuss Informational Inventory and Decide What Needs to be Ordered Before Home Show

Wilkins said he has ordered more materials from Julie including flyers, magnets, and keychains. Price said he will investigate the cost of some more flyers and get back to the commission on what materials he can provide for the Spring Home Show. Wilkins said he would connect with the event organizer to reserve a booth, and Mathews said a sign-up for booth shifts will be sent to the commission soon.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Since the last meeting where the commission discussed dangerous trees on private property, Swenson did some research on what other cities do with dangerous trees on private property. Swenson provided two handouts, one included an article on the Illinois Arborist Association's ordinances for tree removal on private property, and the other referred to the municipal code for the City of Highland Park, IL: specifically, section 94.010. McLaren asked if the handouts refer to how the government handles dangerous trees or what the property owners have to do about dangerous trees. Swenson answered, saying the information varies but in general, if a tree is hazardous, other cities will remove the tree and the owner will be billed via a lien on the property. Freeman asked if the ordinance from different municipalities explains their procedures, i.e., who deems it a hazard and to what degree? Swenson clarified that the article does not give specific details as it is just a general overview. Wilkins mentioned a common protocol for the past couple

years has been to have an arborist evaluate trees and if it is deemed hazardous, a removal notice will be sent to the property owner with a lien warning if it is not addressed. Maroon agreed that it would make sense to put a lien on a property if trees are not being handled properly by the owner. Maroon confirmed that if a tree limb falls from one property onto a neighboring property, the limb is now considered the responsibility of the neighboring property. Wilkins said that based on a discussion he had with the City of Peoria legal department 20 years ago, if a tree was previously observed as being hazardous before a limb fell, then the limb that falls onto neighboring property is still the responsibility of the tree's owner. Johnson said he was not aware of that protocol. Maroon said the Public Works department will investigate this new information as it is not how they have been operating.

Swenson referred to the Illinois Arborist Association's article (see Attachment A) where it states they are curious if other municipalities have ordinances that allow city officials to force homeowners to remove potentially hazardous trees. Mathews referred to the City of Peoria's ordinance which states that the city arborist can deem a tree to be a public nuisance. Wilkins said the ordinance states that the city arborist does not need to be a certified arborist, it is anyone the Public Works Director appoints to that title; the terms city arborist and licensed tree expert are used interchangeably within the ordinance. Mathews said that Public Works will need to work with Community Development with issuing citations and fines to property owners for hazardous trees. Graves added that Community Development will need to be trained on what to look for in order to issue a citation. Maroon said the commission and staff members need to investigate the ordinances and consult with legal on how to implement new procedures. Freeman mentioned an appeal process will need to be implemented.

NEW BUSINESS

Freeman mentioned PUFAB will be participating in a booth at the Forest Park Nature Center's Earth Day Festival in April.

McCarty mentioned the Rotary North Club planted 75 trees at Donovan Park and Cassidy Park a few years ago. He asked if the club plans to do another planting event in the future. Freeman answered, saying he has not yet heard from the club regarding plantings. McCarty asked if there are any areas in the city with room for 15-20 trees to be planted. Freeman said Springdale may be a good spot to begin planting as many of the current trees are fairly old.

McCarty asked if any more trees could be planted at Donovan Park. Freeman answered, saying Ameren sponsored a tree planting at that park earlier in 2023; he said he would need to evaluate whether it would be feasible to plant more trees at the park.

McCarty mentioned Bloomington's Ecology Action Center which plants 10,000 trees in Bloomington-Normal and McLean County each year. Freeman said Ameren worked with the city on October 7th and planted 100 trees in city rights-of-way.

Freeman proposed that the Green Infrastructure Coordinator observe the vacant lots in Peoria to work on an urban forestry plan, then the city and the park district can reach out to advocacy and corporate groups to collaborate on tree plantings to make progress quickly. McLaren mentioned it would be beneficial to coordinate with Community Development to identify properties that should be considered for plantings.

McLaren asked Maroon if there were any changes to the Forestry budget for 2024. Maroon answered, saying it is still status quo.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS AN ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA SHOULD CONTACT A COMMISSION MEMBER PRIOR TO THE MEETING. ALL OTHER PUBLIC INPUT WILL BE HEARD UNDER PUBLIC COMMENT NEAR THE END OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING.

NOTE: THE ORDER IN WHICH AGENDA ITEMS ARE CONSIDERED MAY BE MOVED FORWARD OR DELAYED BY AT LEAST 2/3 VOTE OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT.

CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE

Anyone wishing to make a public comment can do so by sending those comments to Public Works, by **12:00 p.m.** on December 4, 2023, Public comments can be sent to the public works department, in writing, at **publicworks@peoriagov.org** or via fax at 309-494-8855. The email or fax should be labeled "public comment for December 4, 2023, PUFAB Committee Meeting," and we ask that you include your name and address.

Citizens wishing to address an item not on the agenda should contact a commission member prior to the meeting. All other public input will be heard under public comment near the end of the committee meeting.

NEXT MEETING

March 5, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, McCarty motioned to adjourn the meeting; Price seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:06 PM.

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