

Whitewater Urban Forestry Commission
November 24, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: by Coburn, Chair, at 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Anne Zarinnia, Jerry Schoen, Brandon Knedler, Karen Coburn, Sherry Stanek, Chuck Nass, Staff

Absent: Karen McCulloch, Terri Smith, Bev Stone

Approval of Agenda: Coburn requested that we amend agenda items slightly by moving the next meeting discussion date to the beginning of this meeting. Zarinnia moved to approve with change, Schoen 2nd; unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes: Knedler moved to approve, Zarinnia 2nd; unanimously approved.

Staff Report: Work will begin on SE quadrant in late winter. Pruning and planting in that area will be done in spring 2016. Tree order is awaiting approval and will be put in for 180 trees and cost will hopefully be covered by upcoming Center and George St. projects to be done in 2016. Coburn asked about trees for Clay St. Nature Park and whether trees could be planted for shade where people fish at Trippe Lake. Nass said the trees could be planted at Clay St. and that he would look at the Trippe Lake Park area. Trees can be planted outside of SE quadrant if needed also. Coburn shared that a resident was concerned about an old elm tree on Boone Ct. and worried that it would be taken down during Center St. project. Nass assured Coburn that there are no plans to remove that tree, that only 2 crab trees will be coming down. The elm will stay.

Schoen told us that the National Wildlife Federation will give 100 free trees. The application has to be filled out online and Stanek will try to do this. Stanek said the trees will be very small whips and Nass said we could plant them at our tree farm where we have other small trees growing. Schoen said they also have an offer for pollinators and Stanek said she will check these out also. Schoen asked whether Bloomingfield will be burned again next spring, Nass said it will. Schoen said he will be scattering purple coneflower seeds there again next year, trying to get them established to crowd out some of the grass and thistle. Stanek offered to provide more seeds for this from her yard. Coburn reminded us that the Seed Library would also appreciate receiving seeds to be given out next spring to the community.

Coburn asked Knedler for the list of parks that UFC should be touring to make recommendations for plantings. Knedler said he thought the list had been given and he will bring it to next meeting. Coburn gave preliminary sketch of Clay St. Nature Park Butterfly/Hummingbird Garden planting proposal to Knedler to present at next Park Board meeting. Nass, Stanek and Zarinnia all thought too many trees were proposed and Coburn said that it could be changed and that this was for discussion. Knedler will report Park Board thoughts in January.

Coburn said that she and Smith attended Wild Ones program and that Smith had intended to give presentation but is absent. Coburn said she was surprised at how many butterflies overwinter in Wisconsin and that there are many, many varieties. Hoping Smith will give report at January meeting.

Coburn asked Knedler when we would report to Park Board on park tours. She asked that Matt Amundson put it on the agenda so that we can present our proposals and discuss them with Park Board when this happens. Our proposals will be fluid because most of these things are done over several years and that things often change in that time. Park Board meets next the second week of December.

Coburn reported that Chris McDonell, Assistant City Mgr., told her that the city has found that it is too expensive to bury wires underground, and that taxpayers would have to pay for it which makes it unattractive.

Bird Talk/Bird City: Seed Library progress has been made. Lots of seeds were given this fall and will be packaged by Richard Ehrenberg, resident volunteer, and made available to the community in spring 2016 for planting.

There will be a Native Plantings presentation at the Irvin L. Young Library on February 1, 2016 by Prairie Bob of Native Seed Source sponsored by the UFC along with The Effigy Mounds group.

Bird of the Year 2016: Coburn requested nominations and Stanek nominated nuthatches, and downy and hairy woodpeckers because of the good they do with removing beetles from trees. They are a natural way to fend off destruction of trees from infestation, not completely eliminating beetles like emerald ash borer, but helping to control them. Knedler nominated hummingbirds because of our focus on the hummingbird and butterfly garden proposals. Schoen likes downy woodpeckers. Stanek said there is a very active group in Whitewater that tags hummingbirds and butterflies. Knedler moved that we make woodpeckers our 2016 Bird of the Year, Zarinnia 2nd; unanimously approved downy and hairy woodpeckers for 2016.

Coburn showed an example of a sign for the Chimney Swift Tower. Nass said to get a design to him and Coburn will do this and he will order the sign. Stanek said she had been approached numerous times by resident asking about the tower while working near it.

Coburn passed out the Summit Dental landscape proposal that was developed by a UFC subcommittee. The decision was made to recommend a much less invasive burning bush and to change the lilacs which don't offer much to birds with highbush cranberry bushes which have berries that birds love and that are decorative. The report has been given by Coburn to Chris Munz-Pritchard as requested.

Stanek reported that she found the city's Landscape Guidelines while working on the Summit Dental proposal and was upset that she had not been trained in this as a member of the Plan Commission who approves these landscape plans. She has contacted Chris Munz-Pritchard with her concerns and asked for a refresher course on this for Plan Comm. members. Munz-Pritchard will meet with Stanek next week to discuss. Stanek feels Plan Board was probably negligent in approving the plan for Campus Edge Apartments where the huge old oak tree and two large maple trees were removed. The property owner had every right to develop his

property and the tree's placement made development very difficult to save them. There was much discussion at the time of the desire to not lose these trees but very little attention to what would replace them which would have been greatly aided by the city's Landscape Guidelines. The Guidelines would have required many more trees be planted to replace the trees removed. Nass will look at the plan and make recommendations for the addition of trees to plant. Coburn will present these to the property owner for consideration.

Nass said that he has applied for a grant for a tool that would have shown the health of the large burr oak tree that has caused so much discussion in the city. Without this tool, it is impossible to tell much about the interior structure of a tree. With this tool, you can get a very good idea of the inner health of a tree and therefore make a good decision about preservation or removal. From the city's standpoint, if a tree is in poor health it poses a huge risk to residents and must be removed. After the fact regarding the burr oak at Campus Edge development, it's easy to see that this tree should have been removed as it was very damaged by previous work that cut through its roots. It had very little healthy structural wood and Nass likened it to a fence post that is hollow but because of its shape, continues to stand. The outer wood was still receiving nutrition but most of the inner tree was being naturally composted by the fungi that do this work on decaying tree matter. The city needs this tool but it is about \$15,000 so Nass is hopeful that we can get this grant. Zarinnia said if this tool would make a difference, we should have it for public safety.

Tree City/Tree Talk: Zarinnia reported on the Heritage Tree program. Nass has recommended the Town of Dunn website as a possible template for our program. Zarinnia attended the City of Fitchburg's meeting on Heritage Trees and was very impressed with the way they sought citizen input about how they felt about the trees on their streets and whether they thought there were enough or wanted more or less. Fitchburg has recruited two interns from the UW-Madison forestry dept. to work on this as part of their graduate program work. We could do the same with UW-W botany students here. Would Nass find it helpful to do this? Coburn said we may be getting an intern from Carroll College next semester.

Coburn said there will be a library display in March on Heritage Trees. New books on trees for both adults and juveniles will accompany the display.

Plan Commission Report: Stanek referred the group to a previous discussion on Landscape Guidelines and said she was out of town for the November Plan Board meeting.

Parks & Recreation Board Report: Knedler referred us to earlier discussion of park tours and UFC proposals to Park Board and felt we'd covered it well there.

Next Meeting discussion: Coburn proposed that we not meet in December as usual because our meeting would be during Christmas week, and instead suggested that we divide into two ad hoc groups and meet to discuss the Heritage Tree and Native Species subjects as small groups who would then come back and report to the committee. These ad hoc meetings would be open to community participation. Zarinnia agreed to lead the Heritage Tree group with Schoen, McCulloch and Stone and Stanek agreed to lead the Native Planting group with Knedler, Smith and Coburn on December 8, 2015 in the second floor conference room and city manager's meeting room at 4:30 p.m. It was agreed to not have a December general meeting.

Effigy Mounds Report: Oberle was not present so Coburn reported that there will be a joint presentation on prairie and backyard plantings by Prairie Bob at the library with UFC on February 1st.

Suggested Topics: None.

Stanek moved to adjourn, Schoen 2nd, unanimously approved.

Next Meeting: January 26, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Stanek, secretary