

City of Whitewater Urban Forestry Commission

January 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Community Room - 1st Floor - 4:30 p.m. and Virtual

312 W. Whitewater St., Whitewater, WI 53190

Call to Order: Called to Order by Chair Stanek at 4:32 pm

Roll Call: Leaver, McCormick, Neis, Oberle, Stanek, Taylor. Absent: Alt, Chandler, Neumeister

Hearing of Citizens Comments: John and Isabel Erickson from the Mulberry Glen landscaping group asked how they could become involved in Bird City and Tree City projects. David Stone also attended.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve Leaver, 2nd McCormick. Unanimous approval.

Approval of November 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes: Motion to amend Oberle. In Effigy Mounds section, second sentence to read as follows: "A *tour* was well attended by 24 volunteers with a *first* cleanup scheduled for December." Motion to approve as amended Neis, 2nd McCormick. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: (Leaver) No new activity. The balance remains at \$1,049.

Staff Report: (Neumeister via email) The tree city application has been completed and received. The city completed several removals and trimming projects on the terraces before bucket truck breakdown. The bucket truck has been out of service since November and major repairs are necessary and the city is not sure when it will be back in service. At this time, they are working on small tree trimming that can be accomplished from the ground.

Stump grinding is progressing on terraces, but they have not been able to work in parks with little to no frost in the ground.

Tree order from Johnson's nursery for 2 street reconstruction projects (E Main St & Yoder Ln) as well as our city planting with a total of 97 trees on order.

The city has ordered 200 free trees 2–3-year-old saplings 12-18 inches not including roots (50 each Bur, Red, Swamp White Oak and Shagbark Hickory) from The Argosy Foundation. These trees are individually packed to hand out at the tree sale and possibly to school children.

Arboretum Update: Andy Beckman, a city arborist will assemble 43 tree identification stakes that have arrived from Plants Map. Tree information will be entered into QR code as we go along. Location information is not included in the QR code, but location data needs to be transmitted from the city to the DNR. Tree mapping to continue with (Neis) researching how to get the most accurate gps location. Stanek reported that the DNR Wisconsin Community Tree Map site is what is being used by the city and is very accurate. Cell phones are not accurate, but UWW may have a suitable mapping device (Eric Compass) that might be loaned to us. We could rent one, and the city may be a resource. The city's entries into the DNR's WCTM of trees done by Andy that is a good start for the AASP.

A subcommittee will be formed to discuss signage for the pavilion. Stanek will set up a meeting with Boettcher, Neis, and Alt to discuss.

Stanek and Neis will present on Arboretum progress at Senior Center on February 25, 2023 from 9 - 2.

Starin Park's historic water tower recent engineer's report was shared (Oberle and McCormick). The tower is not in perfect condition but is not in danger of collapse. Prior tuck pointing was concrete, not lime based, which causes expansion and contraction and associated cracking. It was recommended that repairs be made as required over time at a cost of \$1.3 million. That money is not in the city's budget. There may be a non-binding referendum in the future, but the issue is currently tabled. Landmarks Commission is presenting on endangered city landmarks 1-24-23 including the water tower.

Fundraising for 2023: Fundraising sub-committee (Neis) stated we should develop an organized approach to fundraising. Neis then submitted a list of items that need to be done to fully develop the arboretum. This includes further design, construction, funding, maintenance, workshops, school visits, tree sales, self-guidance, website updates, etc. A full list is attached. How are all these things going to get done? It is too much for the UFC alone. It was suggested by Neis that we must either pare down the list or get more people involved to perform the tasks.

Neis made a motion to attempt to establish an Arbkeepers organization to fulfill those functions that is operational and self-performing complete with training, tools, uniforms,

etc. that would be supported by the UFC and/or the city. There was a question of how to fund such a group, and about its structure, formation, and operation. There was a consensus that a meeting to attract volunteers to such a group may be more successful in spring.

Oberle suggested that groups such as Jefferson County Master Gardeners or Walworth County Master Gardeners may be willing to become leaders in that project. Barry Rosenberg could be a point person for the Arbkeepers and a new member of the UFC. After further discussion it was agreed the motion would be tabled and revisited at the next meeting.

Neis stated we need to start developing the arboretum educational component on Arbor Day, Friday, April 28 to include the middle school Kiwanis Builders Club with the assistance of the UWW Key Club.

It was decided that this year's tree sale will be April 22 and 23rd from 10-2 p.m.

Grant progress: Eric Boettcher, Neumeister and Stanek met with Olivia Witthun, our DNR rep. and discussed the status of 2022 DNR Grant. An extension requested by Boettcher has been approved. The grant will be completed when we have met the rest of the requirements to the best of our ability as a city and a committee. Reimbursement will be based on expenditures, staff, equipment and volunteer hours and represent our meeting of the commitments we made in our grant application. Progress is ongoing. Areas of focus are Tree Inventory work, (role of Barry Rosenberg), ordering signage for Education Center, removal of trees and stump grinding as well as Community Tree Management Institute attendance (Stanek continuing program in Feb. and June).

Focus for 2023 after 2022 requirements are completed will be to:

- continue to maintain 2022 plantings (Stanek)
- raise funds for further development of Arboretum (Neis)
- form a subcommittee to work on spring programs - Arbor Day, Earth Day and World Migratory Bird Day plans - and work to promote (Neis and Stanek)
- Spring 2023 Community Tree Sale (Alt) set dates and plan for promotion
- continue development of educational signage, path development, and plan for adding signage mounting structures and storage to Educational Center
- further development of the Friends of the Arb (Neis). and other outreach in the community. UFC and City will revisit applying for 2024 next year in coming months.

Tree City: Tree Benefit Calculator work is developing. (Stanek)

Bird City/Bird Talk: Bird City Renewal status; Project Feederwatch (Chandler)

Items For Future Discussion: Arbkeepers formation. Erickson involvement.

Adjournment: Motion McCormick, 2nd Leaver. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Next Meeting: February 27, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Taylor

Secretary, UFC

Attachment.

DRAFT