



Minutes of the
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023

Members Present: Bob Brantsch, Andy Boateng, Jeff Napieralski, Laura Root

Members Absent: John Berg, Jeff Saltzman, Mike Rauh

Staff Present: Sue Mottl, Arborist and Jill A. Janson, Secretary

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Brantsch called the meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission to order at 3:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Ms. Janson called the roll.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

VISITOR RECOGNITION – No Visitors were present for this meeting.

OPENING QUESTION – The opening question was posed with responses.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Napieralski made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2023 meeting. MOTION PASSED

NEW BUSINESS:

- 2023 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Forestry Grant – Ms. Mottl provided the details of a grant that was offered by the US Government earlier this year to help communities with forestry related projects. The State of Ohio applied for \$45 million and received a \$9 million grant. The first phase was offered to underserved communities only with no requirement for matching funds. The second phase is now open to all other communities who will be required to provide matching funds with a minimum application of \$100,000. It is estimated that there will be a third round, which will be residual funds available to the State of Ohio as a pass-through for a lesser minimum fund amount. The deadline for this phase is June 1. Ms. Mottl has submitted a request to hire a full-time forestry specialist dedicated specifically to tree work and has gained approval from City Administration. Legislation is being presented to City Council this Thursday for final approval to proceed in applying for the grant; which is a 50-50 matching grant for five (5) years equaling a total of \$316,000. Mr. Napieralski made a motion to authorize Chairman Brantsch to send an email to City Council on behalf of the Commission in support this grant. MOTION CARRIED.
- 2024 Tree Fest – Ms. Mottl suggested that the Commission consider collaborating with the Parks & Recreation Department/Stow Munroe Falls Library's Earth Day Fest for next year. This could result in a more effective program offering educational opportunities for visitors. Mr. Brantsch likes the idea of having it at Silver Springs Lodge but, would like to keep it to a Thursday or Friday evening. Ms. Mottl said the P&R Department and Library would likely prefer that it be held on a Saturday. Ms. Mottl suggested we invite P&R Director Linda Nahrstedt and Activity Supervisor Chris Sheridan to the Commission's June meeting to discuss.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 2023 Tree Fest Recap – See above discussion under 2024 Tree Fest. This year we had a decent turnout with partly cloudy weather. About twenty (20) registrants did not participate (out of 120). Unfortunately, the event still seems to draw repeat visitors with the only interest in receiving a free tree.
- 2022 Urban Tree Canopy Restoration Grant Update – Ms. Mottl reported that sixty-three (63) trees were delivered and planted between April 11–19. Seasonal staff have installed all of the deer guards and watering bags on the trees. We will have the final trees planted in the fall; which will complete the grant.
- Tree City Event/Awards – Ms. Mottl reported that she was not able to attend due to a very important residential development meeting she was required to attend with the Mayor and Planning Department on the same day. She did receive the City's award commemorating 43 years and the City's 14th year Growth Award.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Invasive Plant Restrictions – Mr. Brantsch wanted to know how the City could restrict the planting or removal of invasive trees or plants on private property. Several ideas were discussed:
 - Ms. Mottl suggested an educational walk-about;
 - Ms. Root thought a video could be made and posted on our website;
 - Mr. Brantsch said he would like to invite City Council to do a walk-about instead of our annual PowerPoint presentation.
 - Another idea Ms. Mottl had was to send Council a video presentation.
- Native Plant Garden at City Hall – Ms. Mottl told the Commission that the exterior front entrance of City Hall would be going through a renovation this year with a completion date prior to the 911 event. She thought it would be a great idea to install a 16x20 native plant garden in close proximity of the City Hall area. She thought a senior citizen group could oversee students from Highland Elementary to maintain the garden as an educational program.

STOW SENTRY NEWS ARTICLES –

June: Wildlife Benefits of the Urban Forest – Jeff Saltzman
July: “Patriotic Tree” – Mike Rauh
August: Callery Pear/Invasive Trees – Jeff Napieralski

NEXT MEETING: June 12, 2023

ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Bob Brantsch, Chairman

Jill Janson, Secretary