

Minutes
Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission
March 26, 7:00 pm

Members Present: Eric Moore, Sheri Callaghan, Flemming Holm, Bill Felix, Jerome Guest, Thayne Bedenkop, Daniele Eller, Cindy Peebles (Council Representative), Mike Lippert (Staff Representative).

Minutes of February 26, 2025

Minutes were approved as amended

Minutes of March 20, 2025 Subcommittee

Minutes were approved as amended

Old Business:

1. Maple Syrup - Jerome updated the commission... There were fewer available bottles than anticipated. Below are the updates:

A. Girl Scouts	24 bottles (1 for each scout plus troop leader)
B. Fall Festival	4 bottles
C. Tree City USA	4 bottles
D. City Council	2 bottles with dipping stick (May 19 council)
E. Tela	80 oz (who will raise funds and donate to support Stearns Woods)
F. Miscellaneous	additional bottles as available

Jerome provided some bottles to show the commission the final product.

2. Stearns Woods Nature Preserve Updates – Eric reported he and Clay met with 15-16 homeowners surrounding Stearns and dropped off flyers to those that weren't home. He received no resistance and there seemed to be general support for Stearns Woods plant management and an upcoming large invasive removal event. Eric is planning a June event over a weekend, working 10am-4pm with chainsaws and heavier equipment (possibly a chipper) for larger honeysuckle removal.

Cindy requested more visuals on the Stearns Woods plans. It was noted the commission has printed maps. Some will be included in the final plan. It may be possible to transfer some of the information to the city's GIS map. The schedule for the Stearns Woods Nature Preserve Plan is fairly open-ended at this point. Long-term, it is hoped the large invasives are removed and the remaining invasives can be controlled with minimal labor.

Thayne updated everyone on the wildflowers that are finished blooming and those that are starting to bloom. He noted that the healthier forest has led to wildflowers showing up in new places. Wildlife is abundant. A barred owl has its habitat there. Wood ducks were also sighted.

Protecting new plantings is a priority at Stearns. Ten buckeye seedlings were planted last week. Tree guards, chicken wire, and other fencing should be utilized as necessary. It was suggested the Green Areas budget be increased to \$3,000 annually. This would help with new plantings, tree/plant guards, pesticides and related equipment, etc. A specific budget will be presented to the city during budgeting.

Upcoming work events: April 19, May 10, May 25, and June 7. Tentatively, the time was set for 9-noon for these dates. Two wildflower events (Carol Trossett) are scheduled – reservations are closed for the first walk (15 signed up). There are still a couple of openings for the 2nd event.

3. Public Green Area Management Plan Update – Tabled.
4. Pesticide Application Training – Todd, Gayle, Bill and Sheri received training. Another training is being organized for other members who are interested. The date is yet to be determined.
5. Arbor Day – Flemming has reached out to Hilltop school with no response yet. He will continue to reach out. Todd Wales and Debby Martin will provide information about trees and past arbor day events. We are still anticipating an arbor day event at Hilltop on April 25, 2025.
6. Annual Report to City Council – Sheri is working on the powerpoint. We are still shooting for the May 19 agenda. Maple syrup will also be included in the presentation.

Miscellaneous:

1. Bill has continued to work on the Taking Root mini grant application. This needs to be approved by Rusty before submitting. We agreed last meeting to apply for \$1,500. UFBC was in favor of purchasing small plants/trees (not seedlings) with deer protection, etc. with the monies.
2. A couple of eagle scouts are looking for projects and reached out to UFBC. The Commission mentioned several ideas including a bench along the Hike/Bike Trail (must be approved by Rusty or Rec Commission), blue bird house(s), and bat house(s). The bird and bat houses would require research as they have unique specifications.
3. Thayne has acquired working signs and sign stands, a fist aid kit as well as pesticide (purchased with city monies) for work sessions at Stearns.
4. Next meeting will be April 23, 2025

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Mike Lippert