

Minutes
Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission
June 28, 2023 7:00 pm

Members Present: Bobbi Strangfeld, Gail Bason, Jerome Guest, Daniele Eller, Thayne Bedenkop, Sean Creighton, Sheri Callaghan, Todd Wales, Andrea Betts, Jodi Woffington and Mike Lippert (Staff Representative).

Minutes of May 24, 2023

Minutes were approved.

Old Business:

Beautification Nominations/Awards – The Commission received approximately 30 nominations for beautification awards plus 3 more for historic preservation (which is not UFBC’s responsibility). Andrea agreed to take photos for the properties needing them – some already had photos. It was agreed the Commission would review the nominations before our next meeting in August and then vote on awardees. Mike noted we have 3 award plaques from last year and can order 3-4 more brass plaques as required for the Community Spirit category and Tree category. Debby Martin’s proposed schedule for the awards was distributed so the annual event can take place at the October City Council meeting.

Stearns Woods Update – There was a small clean-up event last Sunday – a couple commission members attended along with a new volunteer from an adjacent property. Additional events are scheduled July 8, July 23, August 12, August 27, September 9, and September 24. It was suggested each event would be “chaired” by a different UFBC representative. Communication and updates between members will be key and some training may be required. Work will be concentrated at the two entrance locations and involve vines and honeysuckle removal mostly. Flyers were distributed to homes around Stearns Woods letting them know work was being done and volunteers needed.

Several members visited Lloyd Library downtown to investigate the bamboo like material in Stearns Woods. After investigation it was determined the material was Kentucky Cane (a relatively rare native) – not bamboo as some had suggested. This was further confirmed by Dan Boone and Tom Borgman (great Parks), two local plant experts.

The Commission would like to coordinate their work at Stearns Woods with Jerry Gonzalez, the owner of the property at 333 Oliver Road, who has begun some invasive removal himself. There is some concern invasive removal may proceed more quickly than the follow-up planting of natives. This would permit more invasive plants to develop. The Commission would like to arrange a meeting with Jerry and Rusty and/or invite Jerry to a UFBC meeting. Herbicide application is another issue. The City will need to provide budget (unless another source of funds is available) and approval of all application.

Recreation Center Planting – Approximately 1/3 of the circle area has been planted. \$360 was spent on plants which were installed by Flemming, Gail, Thayne, and Sheri. It is estimated another \$700 will be needed for plant supplies. However, the Public Works’ budget appears inadequate for this purchase at this time. The additional planting will occur this fall, if funds become available, or next year.

New Business:

Miscellaneous: Some Commission members attended the Springfield Pike streetscape public meeting Tuesday. The Commission expressed displeasure at not being a stakeholder in this process. The Commission would like to have the opportunity to provide input for projects such as this.

Sean and Todd were congratulated for their recent involvement in the new Music Garden at nearby Glenwood Gardens. The Music Garden is part of the overall Discovery Gardens area and includes the development of previously undisturbed property across from Speedway.

A local boy scout is trying to achieve his eagle scout status and was looking for a "green" (tree or plant) project with the City. The Commission discussed several possible projects, but ultimately decided a good task could involve labeling City trees in City park(s), green areas and/or along certain sidewalks. Bobbi will discuss it with Rusty.

Bobbi Strangfeld stepped down as chairperson for UFBC. Daniele Eller was nominated and approved to take over. She will assume the role as chairperson immediately.

Next meeting will be August 23, 2023.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Mike Lippert