

**Minutes**  
**Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission**  
**October 26, 2022**

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

Minutes of September 28, 2022

Minutes were approved

Old Business:

Beautification Awards – Andrea presented the awards at the last council meeting after preparing the powerpoint. Once again, the recipients seemed well-pleased with their awards as 5 out of 6 showed up to the meeting. This year, we had to order a minimum of 10 granite plaques, but only used 7, so we have 3 for next year plus two leftover tree plaques.

Fall Festival – The UFBC booth at fall festival was well attended; it seemed more active than usual. Approximately 40 people participated in the raffles for the asters and the beehouse. UFBC members at the event helped with educating residents and providing informational flyers.

Make a Difference Day October 22 – There were 16 adult volunteers and 4 children who helped out. Because of the dry fall, the 6 persimmon trees and 1 magnolia tree were not planted – only holes were dug. Trees will be planted after the next good rain. Vines and invasive honeysuckle were removed near the Oliver Road entrance to Stearns Woods. Refuse was stacked next to the road to be picked up by public works.

GIS Update of Stearns/Green Areas Limitations – An “App” has been created for mapping Stearns Woods and completing the plant survey. Margaret Minzner of OKI has been instrumental in creating the “App” that may need some fine tuning. The current plan is to begin digitally surveying Stearns Woods next spring. The information would be publicly available through OKI, so Sean would like city (Rusty) approval before proceeding. Ideally, a meeting could be set up at Stearns Woods with Rusty, Jodi (Council rep), Margaret and Sean to discuss. Ultimately, the material would be uploaded to the City’s ESRI Gis map. Margaret and Carol Trosset (who performed 2022 non-digital Stearns Woods wildflower survey) have indicated they would be interested in providing wildflower walks/surveys next year from February through April.

ODNR Urban Canopy Restoration Grant – Following receipt of comments from Sean and Todd regarding the updated tree management plan, the grant application was submitted for street tree infill following the loss of tree canopy, particularly due to emerald ash borer. City council was kept aware of this grant and even held an emergency meeting to pass a resolution of support.

Stearns Woods and/or Green Areas Trust history, plan and limitations – No report.

Miscellaneous – There was lively discussion regarding the dry lawns on the hill and the weed issues in the vicinity. There was no resolution. It was noted that there were several new trees planted this spring which were leaning and not straight. Members don’t recall this issue in the past. It was recommended to try to

straighten them before year-end or they ultimately may become unsightly, or worse, a liability/hazard in the future.

Thayne presented an outline of some ideas to create a volunteer stewardship organization to maintain Stearns Woods. He presented some historical information on past stewardship projects at Stearns Woods as well as a couple of improvement ideas. Progress has been intermittent due to the changing city administration and city council through the years. It was suggested it may make sense to get a master plan/maintenance plan approved by council. This topic is related to the Stearns Woods plant survey and Flemming's work regarding park history and limitations for improvements.

Next meeting will be December 7, 2022.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Mike Lippert