

Minutes
Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission
August 26, 2020 Via Zoom

Members Present: Andrew Heckaman, Gail Bason, Bobbi Strangfeld, Andrea Betts, Melissa Monich, Thayne Bedenkop, Sean Creighton, Kate Miller, Todd Wales, Nancy Averett (City Council Representative) and Mike Lippert (Staff Representative)

Guest: Chris Babb (Environmental Stewardship Commission)

Minutes of July 13, 2020

Minutes were approved.

Old Business:

Urban Forestry & Beautification:

UFBC Annual Report to Council: The annual report was presented to city council on August 17 and was well-received. For next year, it was suggested to obtain commission approval and add information about the planting beds/planters as well as a listing of committee members.

Beautify Wyoming Awards: The awardees have all been notified and write-ups are completed. A powerpoint/pdf will be prepared for presentation to council – probably zoom. Mike will order awards. There was discussion of how to present awards in view of Covid.

Storm Water Workshop: It is anticipated to present a 2-hr workshop with the first hour including a discussion of the watershed in Wyoming and the 2nd hour including a panel discussion of natural storm water mitigation efforts including the use of rain gardens, native plants, etc. Chris Babb of ESC noted their commission is looking into storm water issues in Wyoming currently. He suggested that a spring conference may be better for ESC as they will have more information from their study of flooding locations and alternative solutions. So, in view of this and the cancellation of large events this fall (including fall festival), the commission supports delaying the workshop until the spring.

The rain garden clean-up joint activity with ESC was cancelled this past spring due to Covid. It was agreed to reschedule for October 3, 9-11 AM. Rain date is October 10, 9-11 AM.

Make a Difference Day: The City was awarded a \$2,000 grant from taking root for tree planting in 2020-2021. It was suggested to use approximately half for a meaningful planting this fall at Stearns Woods. Groups of ten or less with distancing/masks could accomplish this. Understory trees are preferred and we anticipate possible plantings to include Witch hazel, bottlebrush buckeye, spice bush as well as dogwood, redbuds, etc. Thayne will review availability with Woody Warehouse.

Tree Inventory: Todd completed and emailed his final report on the tree inventory to members. General observations were that there are quite a few ash trees in poor health, zelkovas and coffeetrees are performing well, and there is a cork tree at Bonham Park. Diversity appears to be good although maples are overrepresented. In general, it appears recent plantings have been consistent with the right tree/right place criteria recommended by ODNR.

New Business:

Trees & Construction: Mike noted that our most recent discussion of this topic in February included listing different standards/specifications for street construction projects versus park or site construction projects. Although the subcommittee did not meet recently, Mike put together a rough draft of proposed standards which he included in the agenda email. It is anticipated the subcommittee will review with a goal of completion of these standards by year-end.

Miscellaneous: Green Areas Trust/Ritchie Preserve: Thayne has performed approximately 40-hours of invasive plant/honeysuckle removal at Ritchie Preserve. Honeysuckle stumps have been left temporarily until an herbicide is applied. The city may be able to provide herbicide. He estimated 1,000 hours are required for major invasive removal at the preserve. Covid has made it difficult to attract volunteers. He commented that diversity is much greater at Ritchie Preserve than Stearns Woods due to the year-round creek flow. There are fish and he identified a snapping turtle. This preserve complements adjacent green areas including Bonham Park, Hillcrest School and, of course, Winton Woods. It is a hidden gem and he is surprised at how many residents are unaware of it.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Mike Lippert