

City of Urbana, Illinois

Minutes of the Urbana Tree Commission Meeting
Public Works Engineering Conference Room
706 S. Glover Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802

Wednesday, December 5, 2012
1:30 P.M.

Members Present: Jeff Dawson, Michael Stevenson, Barbara Anderson, Darin Eastburn

Members Absent: Stewart Berlocher, Thom Fehrmann

Staff Present: Michael Brunk, City of Urbana Arborist

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:43 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from September 5, 2012 were presented for approval. Eastburn moved to approve the minutes, Anderson seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Public Input

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

Exceptional Tree Program Update

Brunk reported that staff was very close to having a program proposal to present to the Mayor and City Council. He said that the details of the program had been narrowed down to three final options:

- Honorary Level

Under this option, the City would have no control over private trees that were deemed exceptional. At this level, only City trees could be preserved. Maximum participation by the public is anticipated under this level, since no regulations could be imposed on private trees. Citizens may become disappointed, however, if a private tree is deemed exceptional and is later removed with no recourse from the City.

- Advisory Level

Under this option, once trees are deemed exceptional, a record of such is made at the County Recorder's Office. Owners of exceptional private trees would need to have a review with City staff before removing the tree, but staff cannot prohibit removal of the tree. This level would also stipulate a specified time frame for public input.

- Public Participation Level

Under this option, owners of exceptional private trees would be required to apply for a permit before removing the tree. There would also be a fee involved. The Tree Commission would make advisory comments after reviewing the permit application, with the City Council making the final decision on removal. If the tree were removed, the owner would pay the City an inch per caliber loss. Monies collected would go to the City's Tree Fund.

Brunk noted that participation would be voluntary for all three levels, meaning that no owner of a private tree would be forced to allow the City to declare his/her tree exceptional. However, there would be incentives involved in participation. Some of these would include Storm Water Utility Fee abatement for one year, six cubic yards of free mulch from the Landscape Recycling Center, free advisement from City staff on tree maintenance, and limited pruning of the tree by the City.

After some discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend the Advisory Level to the Mayor and City Council. Brunk said that the Commission would have an opportunity to amend the plan before the final proposal is presented.

Dawson inquired whether an exceptional tree could be recorded on a title as a property asset. Brunk said this would probably not be feasible, as the tree may not add financial value to the property, but that the ordinance would continue to be enforced if the property changed hands.

Brunk said a list of all trees recommended to the program would be maintained, and the Commission would review the trees together before making a recommendation to City Council.

Former Business

There was no former business to discuss.

New Business

Brunk said a new Commission member had been appointed. Stewart Berlocher was appointed on December 3, 2012. He said there was still one vacancy to fill.

Tour of Landscape Recycling Center

Commission members toured the Landscape Recycling Center. This tour was purely informational, and due to the nature of the tour, could not be audio recorded. The tour ended at 3:14 p.m.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Femi Washington, Recording Secretary
Tree Commission