

City of Urbana, Illinois

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

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

Members Present: Jeff Dawson, Michael Stevenson, Barbara Anderson, Thom Fehrmann

Members Absent: Darin Eastburn

Staff Present: Michael Brunk, City of Urbana Arborist
Kevin Sanderson, Arbor Supervisor
Bruce Cubberley, Arbor Manager

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:42 p.m.

Introductions

Bruce Cubberley introduced himself to the Commission as the City's new Arbor Manager.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from March 7, 2012 were presented for approval. Fehrmann noted that the address of the historic pine tree on Main Street across from the Auto Zone was incorrect; Brunk said he would investigate the correct address and the minutes would be adjusted accordingly. With that change, Anderson moved to approve the minutes, Stevenson seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Tree Inventory Update and Schedule

Brunk said that the City and the Urbana Park District were collaborating on the Tree Inventory Project, which would begin in October. He said that Davey Tree Experts would be inventorying City trees as well as Park District trees. The two entities will share the cost, with the City contributing 78 percent and the Park District contributing 22 percent, pending approval of a formal agreement by the City Council and the Park District board. These percentages were calculated based on the number of trees that each entity will have inventoried. Brunk reported that a database of the trees would be made available for public viewing on Davey's website; he

said hopefully maps will also be made available online. Dawson inquired about the cost of the project; Brunk said it would cost approximately \$60,000 to inventory 18,000 trees. He added that new planting sites would also be inventoried.

Brunk explained that notable or exceptional trees would also be catalogued during the inventory process. He referred to a list of criteria that would help classify trees as 'notable' (Item 20 on page 7 of RFP #1112-05, found on the City of Urbana website). Some criteria include age, rarity, heritage, and location, among others. Both public and private trees will be eligible for notable tree designation; while private trees will not be specifically targeted, any notable private trees encountered during the inventory process will be catalogued pending the owner's approval. That owner would also be given a certificate or some other recognition from the City. Brunk said it was undecided if there would be a conservation easement put into place once a private tree was classified as notable. Brunk said that Davey Tree Experts would be giving a presentation on their inventory process in the upcoming weeks, and these issues would be discussed then. He said that it would cost between \$2000 and \$2500 for Davey to maintain the inventory database on their website.

Dawson inquired about Davey's ability to correctly identify the vast variety of tree species in Urbana; Brunk said that other communities had expressed satisfaction with Davey's tree identification. Discussion ensued regarding the diverse tree population in the City. Brunk distributed a City tree survey from 1975 and discussed fluctuations in diversity between then and now.

Notable Tree Data Collection

Dawson inquired whether the public would be allowed to make recommendations as to trees that may be considered notable. Brunk said they would, and that an ordinance needed to be worked out so that preservation incentives could be made available. Dawson discussed several trees on the University of Illinois campus which might be considered notable or exceptional; Brunk said that while the City does not maintain all the trees on the University's Urbana campus, the University was welcome to recommend trees for the program. The Commission discussed several trees in Urbana that might be considered notable.

1309 Tremont Street Tree Removal

Brunk said a Sweetgum tree planted at 1309 Tremont had been removed as a result of citizen request. He said there were several elderly residents in that neighborhood; these residents were having trouble navigating around the Sweetgum balls on the sidewalk, so the tree was removed to abate a safety hazard. Discussion ensued regarding several removal requests that the Commission had encountered in the past.

LRC Update

Cubberley reported that there had been a screener rented at the site until the previous week. Staff had been screening mushroom mulch, soil, and street sweepings. Discussion ensued regarding use of these items and the City's leaf collection.

Fehrmann asked when firewood sales would begin; Cubberley said they would begin on October 15, 2012. Brunk announced that the LRC is now the supplier of firewood for the Sweetcorn Festival.

Old Business

Fehrmann clarified that the next meeting would take place on December 5, 2012.

Brunk said the Lincoln Elm Dedication would take place at 5:00 p.m. on September 17, 2012 at the lot next to Auto Zone on Main Street.

New Business

Brunk passed around a news article from May 1973 that reported on the formation of the Tree Commission. This was distributed for informational purposes only.

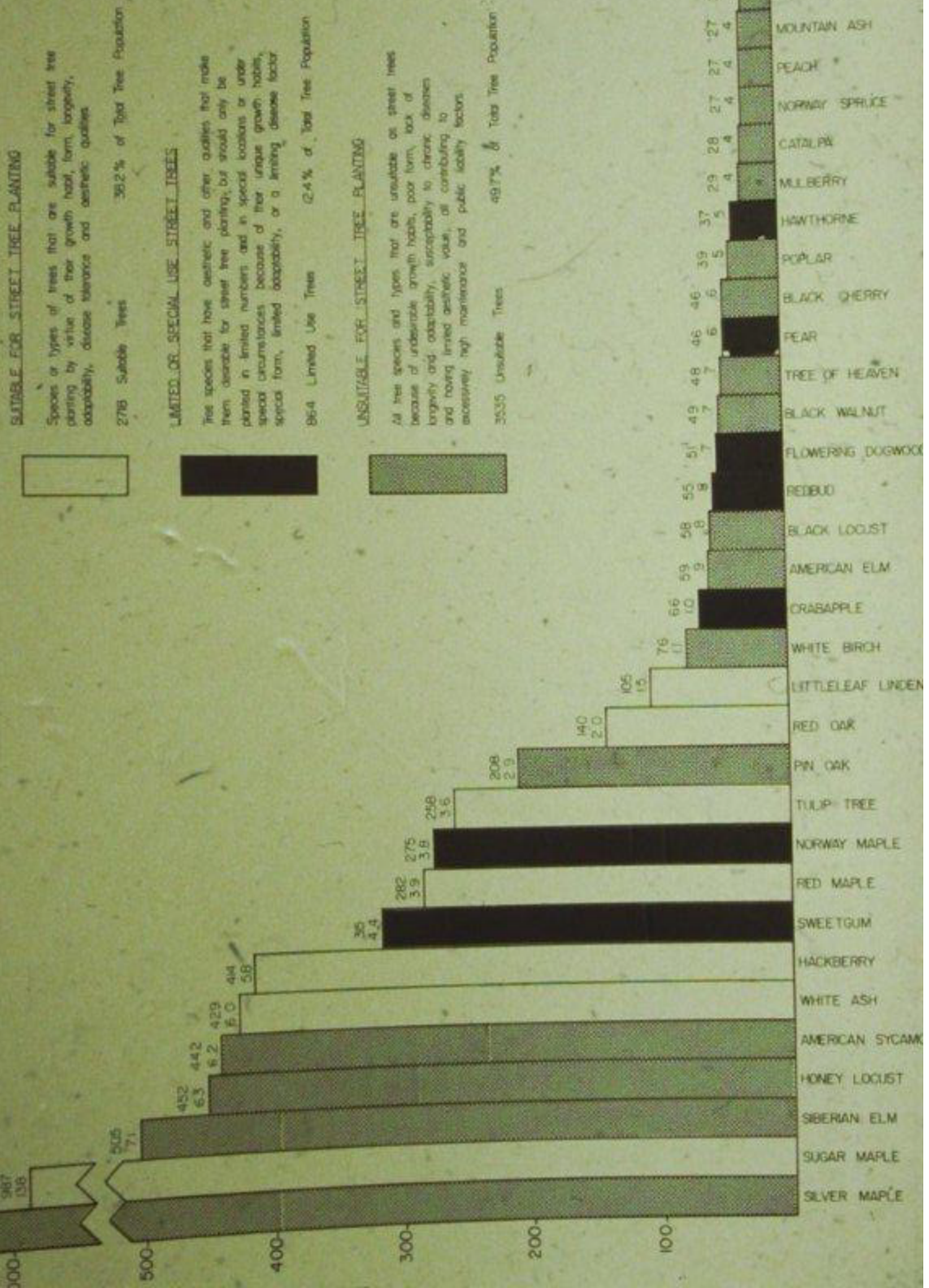
Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Stevenson moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Femi Washington, Recording Secretary
Tree Commission

MAJOR STREET TREES IN THE CITY OF URBANA - 1975 SURVEY

1136 - TOTAL NUMBER OF TREES
15.8% OF TOTAL



SUITABLE FOR STREET TREE PLANTING

Species or types of trees that are suitable for street tree planting by virtue of their growth habit, form, longevity, adaptability, disease tolerance and aesthetic qualities

276 Suitable Trees 36.2% of Total Tree Population

LIMITED OR SPECIAL USE STREET TREES

Tree species that have aesthetic and other qualities that make them desirable for street tree planting, but should only be planted in limited numbers and in special locations or under special circumstances because of their unique growth habit, special form, limited adaptability, or a limiting disease factor

86 Limited Use Trees 2.4% of Total Tree Population

UNSUITABLE FOR STREET TREE PLANTING

All tree species and types that are unsuitable as street trees because of undesirable growth habits, poor form, lack of longevity and adaptability, susceptibility to chronic diseases and having limited aesthetic value, or contributing to excessively high maintenance and public liability factors

355 Unsuitable Trees 49.7% of Total Tree Population

Paley endorses recommended \$48,000 plan *Approved May 1, 1973*

Panel urges effort to protect Urbana trees

By John Smedana
Of The Courier

The Urbana Tree Commission issued its 16-page report Monday and immediately received the endorsement of Mayor Brian Paley.

The five-member panel called for city and park district spending of at least \$48,000 in the next year to solve tree problems and to hire a full-time tree specialist. Paley pledged to recommend the expenditures in the budget he will offer the

city council on March 1.

The commission was named in May by Paley and park board President Bruce Larson. Eugene Himselick is chairman of the commission and Robert Callecod, Robert Chamberlin, Mary Lou Filbey and Amy Richards are the other members.

The commission gave a 2½-hour presentation Monday, including an extensive slide program illustrating tree problems.

The commission urged the hiring of a specialist at an annual salary of from \$12,000 to \$16,000. The commission said the park district should provide some of the salary and budget for the tree program but that the arborist and three-man crew should be city employes.

The commission suggested a budget of \$56,000 for the year but said minimum spending should be \$48,000. The commis-

sion also said \$87,000 would be the most that could be spent.

The report said the suggested budget would cost an average of \$1.60 annually for each Urbana resident.

Despite the mayor's enthusiasm, Ald. Kenneth Appel, D-7th Ward, was not as eager to commit the money.

"While I personally support the report," Appel said, "the city council can't allocate the money unless we see some upswelling of public support."

Current estimates are that the city faces a revenue shortage of \$400,000 in the next budget.

The commission also offered a standard municipal tree ordinance for consideration by the council. The ordinance would regulate tree planting on public property or right of way.

And the commission recommended it continue in an advisory capacity to the city and park district.

The commission recommended the salary range for the three-man tree crew be from \$24,000 to \$48,000. Up to \$10,000 was urged for supplies for the Tree Department and up to \$15,000 for new tree plantings.

Callecod, who made the slide presentation, said that in 1951 52 per cent, about 6,200 trees, of the city tree population was Dutch Elm, killed in the Dutch Elm disease epidemic. He said 2,000 of those trees were in Crystal Lake Park.

Callecod said the city turned to the honey locust as a replacement but that now that species is infested with webworms throughout the city. He said professional planning and advice would have found a better replacement tree.

Callecod showed slides indicating that professional treatment had saved the oldest tree on the University of Illinois campus, while careless treatment resulted in serious injury to the two oldest honey locusts in the city.

Those trees are on the north side of the Urbana Free Library. Callecod said the trees had been damaged by debris thrown against them by workers building the library addition.

The commission said the city had a \$1 million investment in trees and that large trees were "priceless" since they could not be replaced in kind.

Callecod said a 1966 report valued the trees on Green Street between Race and Lincoln streets at \$73,000.