

Urban Forest Commission

Meeting Minutes February 21, 2017

Attendance:

Commissioners: President - Christine Penny, Liz Johnson, Clark Christenson, Beth Peterson, Mike Pennington

City Staff: Erik Birkeland

City Councilors: Em Westelrund

Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:05.

Minute Approval:

The minutes from the January 17th, 2017 meeting with the following corrections.

- A. Ed Harris should be changed to Ed Hall.
- B. Eric should be changed to Erik.

Forester's Report

No report was given due to Dale Sellner's scheduled absence.

New Business:

Executive Committee Meeting

- A. Commissioners discussed the newly formed committee as follows:
 1. The meeting will be attended by City Councilor Em Westelrund, Ex- Officio member Erik Birkeland, City of Duluth Parks and Maintenance Supervisor Dale Sellner, President Christine Penny, and the Vice President.
 2. They are scheduled to meet every 1st Tuesday of the Month at 12:00 p.m.
 3. They will set the Agenda for the following UFC meeting.
- B. Items that were discussed at the first meeting are:
 1. Erik Birkeland will replace Dale Sellner as the Ex Officio City of Duluth Representative on the UFC.
 2. Recruitment tactics to fill the Commission to its full capacity of nine Commissioners.
 3. Charting a vision forward for the UFC.
 4. Finding the best place and time for the UFC to meet. A location that has separation between the Commissioners and the public would be the ideal.

Commission Officer Elections

The Commission put forth a motion to elect Liz Johnson as the Vice President. m/s/c

Recruitment Blurb

An initial draft of a recruitment blurb was reviewed by the Commission. It will be used to solicit recruits to fill the Commission to its full capacity. The strategies discussed are as follows:

- A. The initial draft needs to be edited. President Penny asked that the Commissioners make edits and send them to her to by the end of the week. She will resubmit the blurb for review at the next meeting.
- B. With the anticipated approval of Judy Gibbs as a Commissioner, the Commission will need to fill three positions. The Commission has set a goal to have the positions filled by the end of April. The Commission is working towards filling the vacancies with members that will represent a geographical cross section of the City.
- C. Erik Birkeland will check with the City Clerk's office on the requirements of filling the Commission. Due to the discussion that the current system may disenfranchise new member recruitment, he will ask if there is a way to streamline the appointment process.
- D. The blurb should be posted on the UFC website.
- E. It was suggested that it would be advantageous to the Commission, if a new recruit was a hydrologist with experience in storm water management.

City Forester

The Commission discussed the strategies of filling the City of Duluth's City Forester position. The Commission is looking at how best to fulfill the City's short term needs and working on how best to structure the search to permanently fill the position.

- A. Short Term Topics
 1. The City needs a City Forester.
 2. There is currently no oversight on construction projects.
 3. Planning Department is currently contracting out the services it needs from the City Forester.
- B. Long Term Topics
 1. The Commission should set an additional meeting to discuss/review the current City Forester job description. The job description will be sent to the membership so they can preview the material before the meeting. If the replacement is to be a full time position, it may be advantageous to include duties such as invasive species removal.
 2. The Commission should review other cities models and job descriptions.
 3. The Commission should solicit the forestry needs of City Departments.
 4. Funding the City Forester is a challenge. Replacing the City Forester could be a new hire or a candidate from the City's tree crew.
 5. Once the job description is finished, the Commission should make a formal ask for the revised position from the City Council.

Engineering Streets Projects

Due to the effect street projects have on boulevard trees, the Commission would like to invite Engineering to a meeting to discuss the following:

- A. Provide a list of upcoming projects.
- B. Have Engineering describe their process of designing projects and the means to preserve or provide new tree inventory. Determine when in the project development timeline, it's possible to review the effects of the project on boulevard trees.
- C. Strategize on minimizing negative public opinion.
- D. It was suggested that this become a standing annual meeting.

Old Business

Emerald Ash Borer Plan

Topics of discussion:

- A. The plan is exclusive to boulevard trees.
- B. Tree Inventory systems:
 - a. Dale Sellner has GIS maps that identify Ash Trees. He would like the Commission's input on how best to use this data.
 - b. The Commission and Parks Maintenance should explore tree inventory systems. The system should be easily shared between City Departments.
- C. The Commission should develop a communication and public outreach plan.
- D. Formulate Treatment versus Removal Strategy. This will need to align with challenged funding.
- E. Explore an Adopt a Tree program to enable neighborhoods and community groups participate in the overall strategy.

Adjournment

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25. m/s/c