

# Urban Forestry Committee Minutes

January 8, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

City of Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids Public Service Center – 1500 Scribner Ave NW

Room 2106

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## Committee Members Present:

Becky Pobst, Jonathan Wilson, Geoff Kempter, Hannah Mico, Dan Chase, Annabelle Wilkinson, Nate Henschel, Cindy Irving

Others present: Michelle Slykhouse, Christy Brunsell (City staff)

## Mission:

*To provide guidance to the City Commission and City staff to promote and maintain a vibrant and healthy urban treescape and canopy for citizens of Grand Rapids.*

## Agenda:

1. Call to Order: 4:02 pm
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of Agenda  
Motion made by Geoff Kempter, supported by Becky Pobst, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
4. Approval of Minutes from the October 9 meeting  
Motion made by Geoff Kempter, supported by Dan Chase, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried
5. Public Comments – none
6. Chair & Vice Chair Election  
Jonathan stated Tommy Allen expressed interest in running for chair and nominated Tommy for the position. No other nominations.  
  
Motion made by Geoff Kempter, supported by Dan Chase, to elect Tommy Allen as chair of the Urban Forestry Committee. Motion carried.  
  
Jonathan stated he is willing to serve as vice chair. No other nominations.  
Motion made by Geoff Kempter, supported by Becky Pobst, to elect Jonathan Wilson as vice chair of the Urban Forestry Committee. Motion carried.
7. Old Business
  - Tree awareness items and communication  
Christy stated that she met with Tommy, but that the subcommittee had not yet met. Christy stated she is available to support the subcommittee and get information out to the community as necessary, once they start meeting. Christy asked whether the subcommittee

members have been identified. Minutes from October state Hannah, Tommy and Becky volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Becky stated Friends of Grand Rapids Parks (FGRP) new communications coordinator is organizing some frequently asked questions about trees and there will be some symmetry between information shared by the City and FGRP.

8. New Business

- 2026 meeting schedule

Motion made by Hannah Mico, supported by Nate Henschel, to approve the meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried.

9. Partner Reports

- City of Grand Rapids

Cindy provided an update on the vital streets budget and stated there is funding being received through neighborhood roads fund at the State level. This will increase the number of roads with roto milling projects, which means a lot of opportunities to plant trees in the future.

Cindy responded to Jonathan and stated she can get a GIS file to DTE with the projected projects.

Cindy stated the Engineering Department takes the tree canopy goal seriously and explained that when the Division Ave project was done there were light studies conducted and trees planted as appropriate.

Nate stated Consumers Energy and the City are meeting to go through the 2026 work plan soon.

Annabelle stated the Climate Action Plan consultant is wrapping up work. This will then be presented to City Commission.

- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

Becky stated FGRP has new staff.

Tree planting will be done differently this year and will be more applications based rather than neighborhood based.

A tree id walk will be held at Oakhill Cemetery on January 28.

The Mayor's Greening Initiative will be taking place again this year.

10. Agenda Items for future meeting
  - Zoning change and effect on canopy
  - Approved species list (Spring 2026)
  - Committee strategy (yearly plan)
  - Communications subcommittee
11. Adjournment – 4:40 pm

**Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.  
at Grand Rapids Public Service Center, 1500 Scribner Ave NW**