

Urban Forestry Committee Minutes

April 10, 2025 – 4:00 p.m.

City of Grand Rapids
City Hall – 300 Monroe Ave NW
Room 601

Committee Members Present:

Tommy Allen, Daniel Chase, Nathan Henschel, Cindy Irving, Geoff Kempter, Becky Pobst, Joe Sulak

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: 4:06 pm
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of Agenda
Tommy Allen asked to add a discussion item regarding Landmark Trees to new business. Motion made by Daniel Chase, supported by Geoff Kempter, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.
4. Approval of Minutes from the March 13 meeting
Motion made by Cindy Irving, supported by Nathan Henschel, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried
5. Public Comments – Representatives from the Documenters present.
Recording Confirmed.
6. Old Business
 - Tree awareness items
Becky stated Friends of Grand Rapids Parks (FGRP) is working closely with Christy Brunsell, the Parks and Recreation Department's Marketing Coordinator, to publish a series of blogs and social media posts for the 1st days of Spring, Summer and Fall. Spring posts have included: tree watering, mulching, and limits of pruning season.
 - Tour des Trees
Geoff explained the sponsorship opportunities available and provided contact information for the Tour de Trees organization. Geoff offered to forward the Tour des Trees media packet to Consumers Energy. It was agreed that the UFC is mostly interested in assisting with the coordination of an event at the end.

- Mayors' Monarch Pledge

Tommy stated that the application has been completed by John Ball Zoo and a draft proclamation has been submitted to the Mayor's office for consideration to be read at the April 29 Commission meeting. Ideally, the proclamation should be read prior to May 1, 2025.

7. New Business

- - Landmark Tree

Tommy stated that signage is needed for the landmark tree, Ginkgo, at the John Ball Zoo. Joe stated that staff at the Zoo are aware of the landmark tree designation, and it is possible the Zoo will install signage as part of the current construction project. Joe will verify.

8. Partner Reports

- City of Grand Rapids

- Forestry:

- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid – Treatments in Aman Park are planned to begin Late Spring – Summer 2025
- Operations and Management Plan – Item postponed to May, City is still waiting on completed revisions.
- Canopy Report - Formal report is due in May.
- Priority 2 Pruning project – 4,274 trees have been pruned since February 2024. This project work will carry on into FY 2026.

- Engineering:

- Road Construction Season has begun
- Ann St and Michigan St tree removals enacted prior to April 1. Tree plantings on both projects will follow upon project completion either in the Fall or Spring.
- Cindy stated that the Engineering Department is considering installing change management signage on projects with road changes and where medians have been installed.

- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

- Becky stated that tree planting season started on April 1 in the Uptown Neighborhood.
- ArborFest will take place on April 25 and 26 in the Boston Square and Oakdale Neighborhoods. 250 trees will be planted in conjunction with City Forestry staff and volunteers.
- 40 trees will be given away at River City Scholars.
- FGRP is planning to plant 900 trees this year.
- In response to a question from Dan Chase regarding watering and maintenance of planted trees, Becky replied that it is done mostly by volunteers and FGRP's Green Team.

9. Agenda Items for future meeting
 - Approved species list
 - Forestry Operations & Management Plan
10. Adjournment – 4:55p

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2025 – 4:00 p.m. at City Hall