



**Bloomington Tree Commission  
Minutes of the meeting, 16 October 2019**

**PRESENT:** Kerry Bridges (professional arborist); Tom Coleman, (Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Fine Arts, IUB; Indiana Tree Steward of the Year 2004); David Dilcher (professor emeritus, Geological Sciences, IUB); George Hegeman (Professor Emeritus, Microbiology, IUB); Lindsey Hummel (Environmental Commission); Lee Huss (urban forester, City of Bloomington); Dedaimia Whitney (Certified Tree Steward, Master Gardener).

**ABSENT:** Laurel Cornell (chair, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Studio Art); Mia Williams (landscape architect, Indiana University).

**GUEST:** Daniel Ishmael, Indiana University student intern

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Davey Tree Inventory and Canopy Analysis.** Lee said that the Davey report is now online on the city web page: [www.bloomington.in.gov/treecare](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/treecare). Some citizens have approached Lee about including their private trees in the database. Since Davey's services are paid for by the city and do not cover private property, he told them about the Forestry Service's *iTree* program, which they can use for free. Last of the 'deliverables' from the inventory report is for Davey to refresh the crew on how to use the tablets to keep the database current. Lee remarked that he has yet to see a city that has kept its inventory up to date. He recommended that the inventory be based on political districts, and that Davey (or another firm) come in yearly and update two districts each year. That would result in the database being completely refreshed every three years.

Lee recommends that the city do a partial update to the inventory every year, as opposed to doing a full-scale update once every 5 years. He estimates that the yearly cost would be about \$30,000 per year. Since there is no money budgeted for the update in the 2020 budget, he said the first update would have to be 2021. This means that whoever prepares next year's budget needs to set aside money for the update.

Tom had some concerns raised by the report raises. Discussion about pruning, stumps, and open planting spots ensued.

The TC approved the 21 August 2019 minutes.

**Five-year Urban Forestry Plan.** Lee told the TC that it should start working on the five-year plan. The forester position has been re-advertised.

**Tree Care Manual reprint for 2020.** Julie Ramey will be the primary contact for revisions.

**Bicentennial tree planting bond.** The city is starting to get some preliminary designs for the entry ways to the city. Any tree planting contract should a two-year maintenance contract, including staking, tree diapers, mulching, a one-year inspection with a re-mulch, and any needed replacements.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Meeting with Mayor Hamilton** (George Hegeman and David Dilcher). George and David, who reviewed the first round of forester applications, were disappointed in the quality and quantity of applications. When they attended the 2019 Urban Forester Symposium, they were surprised that a number of the attending contractors and foresters had not heard about the position.

They did a brief survey of salaries in comparable cities and verified that Bloomington is far below the low end of the salary range. George wrote this information up in a statement to present to the mayor. When they met with the mayor, they told him that the salary was too low to attract any qualified successor and that the job needs to be reclassified. (The city of Carmel, most comparable to Bloomington, pays nearly \$60,000 at the bottom of its pay scale.)

Dedaimia asked whether any of the \$800,000 for tree planting could be used to supplement the new forester's position. Lee said 'maybe' and that the money has to be spent within a five-year period.

In the meantime, until Lee's position is filled, all calls to Lee's phone will go to an Urban Forester hot line, which will be monitored by a staff person. Should an emergency occur, Mark Marotz will assign it to Kevin Prince.

## **URBAN FORESTER REPORT**

Julie Ramey will be the point person for submission of the Tree City USA application, which is due 31 December. Lee generally keeps records from 31 December to 31 December for this report.

The street department historically removes trees in public spaces. Lee has given them 17 trees to remove before 1 November. Instead of going to leafing crew in November, which they usually do, they are going to work on removing the ash trees dead near the Blue Ridge neighborhood.

Removals are all done. Lee has 130 trees to plant. He's waiting on the rain.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tree Commission will be 9:30 a.m. 16 October 2019 at the Rose Hill office.

Respectfully submitted,

Dedaimia Whitney