



Bloomington Tree Commission
Minutes of the meeting, 20 November 2019
Rose Hill Cemetery office, 930 W. 4th St Bloomington IN 47404

PRESENT: Tom Coleman (Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Fine Arts, IUB; Indiana Tree Steward of the Year 2004); Laurel Cornell (chair, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Studio Art); David Dilcher (Professor Emeritus, Geological Sciences, IUB); George Hegeman (Professor Emeritus, Microbiology, IUB); Dedaimia Whitney (Certified Tree Steward, Master Gardener); Mia Williams (head landscape architect, Indiana University).

ABSENT: Kerry Bridges (ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, IN-3289BM); Lindsey Hummel (Environmental Commission).

GUEST: Cynthia Bretheim, Hopewell Group; Julie Ramey, COB Community Relations Manager; Russell White, Planning Department; Jenna Whiteaker, COB After Hours Ambassador.

TO DO items

- Dedaimia will forward the relevant portion of the TC's draft tree protection policy to Cynthia.
- Add yearly inspection of specific dark areas to list for urban forester.
- Mia will make contact with Jenna.
- Add to planning construction process that planners ID and evaluate trees to be removed.
- Julie will make reservation and let us know what room we're meeting in.
- Send Julie October minutes.

Introductions and approval of minutes

Agenda review

Dedaimia suggested the issue of TC titles be postponed until Kerry can participate in the discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Bloomington Hospital construction

Citizen Cynthia Bretheim, Hopewell Group. The land acquired for the new hospital is more extensive than formerly realized. The group wants to help protect the mature trees currently on the property and is asking the Tree Commission for assistance. The TC forwarded to her the report on these trees done by students of Professor Burney Fischer. Tom commented that some of the trees involved are memorial trees, that is, trees that are paid for and dedicated to a person or a group. Dedaimia will forward the relevant portion of the TC's draft tree protection policy to Cynthia.

It appears that the hospital has purchased more land than it will use and may re-sell the portions it does not need to developers. Protecting the trees on that land may be problematic.

Downtown trees Jenna Whiteaker, COB After Hours Ambassador.

Jenna is surveying visitors to downtown; one of her questions is 'what makes you feel unsafe?' The predominant answer is that the downtown is too dark. She identified several areas of concern. Underlayer lighting can be very effective, which would prevent pruning and/or disfiguring

the trees. Mia described similar problems on the IU campus. She said the choice is basically between safety and being able to see the stars in the sky. George suggested that some of the trees could be ‘limbed up’ to provide more visibility. Mia said she would be happy to work with Jenna on the process. IU is trying to schedule a ‘night walk’. Mia suggested that a long-term fix would be to add yearly inspection of such areas to the list of tasks for the urban forester.

Planning and transportation projects (Russell White, Project Manager, Planning, COB)

- a. **Sare Road sidepath project.** The city is planning to connect sections of existing multi-use paths from College Mall to Spicewood; the project is projected to remove 23 trees in mid-March. They are proposing to replant 55 trees. Mia suggested root-pruning some of the larger trees during a dormant cycle to help them weather the construction disruption, but that would have to be done right now if tree removal begins in March. Mia asked if the city could somehow ID the trees they want to remove; then the TC can walk the area. Russell said he’d see what he can do.

For the long term, Mia also suggested that the city require planners to identify and assess trees they want to remove. The city inventory can help with identification.

- b. **Adams Street project.** On the east side of the road near Hinkle’s, the city proposes to reduce the south-bound three lanes to two and install a sidewalk and a protected bike lane on the east side. The project proposes removing 5 trees and planting 23. Bids will be awarded on 10 December. Mia is concerned that the proposed planting will change drastically; some, perhaps many, trees won’t be planted because of CBU lines. The TC accepted the proposal as presented, largely because the project is so far along that the time for input has passed. They recommended that the one memorial plaque be retained.

OLD BUSINESS

Urban Forester search. Dedaimia summarized Dave Williams’ email reporting that city HR is still reviewing our recommendation to hire. He requested that the hiring team’s recommendation be kept confidential until reference and background checks are completed and we have “official” HR approval. Once approval is received—hopefully today—it will be accompanied by a salary offer for this year (if candidate is on payroll for the balance of this year) and a salary for 2020 reflecting the across the board 2% salary increase for all full time employees. If the candidate accepts the offer—we’re good to go. If they do not, Dave will have to seek approval from a higher authority to offer more. As our selected candidate lacked any insurance and benefits with his current employer, Dave is cautiously optimistic the candidate will accept our offer.

Tree issues at IU. Mia reported that the IU crew is seeing a lot of maple die-back. Currently, they are doing more surgical pruning as opposed to cosmetic. Most of the mature sugar maples over 8” DBH are affected. IU is working with their own campus tree inventory to figure out how to deal with existing pear trees. She is going meet with Brett about mitigating construction damage.

NEW BUSINESS

Tom suggested the TC devote its December meeting to responding to the tree inventory. Issues that might be addressed in that discussion might include

- creating a Tree Plan for the next 5 years (2020-2024), and
- identifying continuing and new tasks for the Tree Commission.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tree Commission will be 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, 11 December, in one of the city meeting rooms. Julie Ramey will reserve the room and notify the TC.

Respectfully submitted,

