



**Bloomington Tree Commission
Minutes
Wednesday December 16, 2020, 9:30-10:15am
Online via Zoom**

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); Erin Hatch (COB Urban Forester); George Hegeman (Professor Emeritus, Microbiology, IUB); David Parkhurst (Environmental Commission, Professor Emeritus, SPEA); Dedaimia Whitney (Certified Tree Steward, Master Gardener); Mia Williams (landscape architect, Indiana University).

ABSENT: Kerry Bridges (ISA Board Certified Master Arborist); David Dilcher (Professor Emeritus, Geological Sciences, IUB).

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approved minutes of November 18, 2020 meeting.
- The next meeting of the Tree Commission will be 20 January 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.

REPORTS

URBAN FORESTER REPORT [Erin Hatch]

- The city is finishing the cleaning up at Switchyard Park, mostly Tree of Heaven and a few ash, approximately 20 trees on the east side.
- Erin passed her Arborist's exam.
- The department hired Haskell Smith to be foreperson, replacing Kevin Prince, which opens up his position. They probably won't start the hiring process until the new year.
- Mia asked if the budget would allow backfilling the open positions. She said there are no predicted changes in the three seasonal positions, two open positions, and Erin's own position.
- The Tree City application has been completed.
- Erin is bringing a pruning contract forward for the Olcott neighborhood, which will be the last of the year.

TREE ISSUES AT IU [Mia Williams]

- Mia reported the success of two staff planting days in November, which placed 48 trees in the green spaces known as the tailgate fields, 50 trees around Woodburn, the Bryan House, and Ballantine Hall. Since that would normally have been a student volunteer effort, because of Covid 19, this time it was a staff opportunity. There was such a positive response, she's thinking it may become a yearly event. Erin said she thinks that might work for the city, too.
- Mia has been revamping the tree donor program for IU, currently connecting individual plaques to individual trees, which is not sustainable in the long term. She's thinking it might be revised to include groves of existing trees in addition to new plantings guided by the tree inventory, sound tree management, and environmental principles. Rather than plaques, she's visualizing a digital archive to memorialize donors.

BATCHELOR FOREST WORKING GROUP

Dave Parkhurst said the county plat committee is reviewing a proposal for Batchelor School to turn the land they want to sell into two plots. It looks like about half the forest will be covered by the library project. He asked if anyone could Zoom into that meeting. Tom said he would.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION [Dave Parkhurst]

- BEC adopted the environmental justice statement at its last meeting.
- Tomorrow night, they will discuss whether they want to make a statement about the ‘plex’ issue facing the city at the moment, and the city’s new climate action plan.

OLD BUSINESS

Erin hopes to put Tree Trails on next month’s agenda.

TREE NEWS

The Social Lives of Forests. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/02/magazine/tree-communication-mycorrhiza.html>

Respectfully submitted,

Dedaimia Whitney