



**Bloomington Tree Commission  
Minutes of the meeting, 15 September 2021**

**PRESENT:** **Kerry Bridges** (ISA Board Certified Master Arborist); **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); **Jeff Palmer** (Professor Emeritus, Biology, IUB); **David Parkhurst** (Environmental Commission, Professor Emeritus, SPEA); **Dedaimia Whitney** (Certified Tree Steward, Master Gardener); **Mia Williams** (landscape architect, Indiana University).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Approved of July minutes.

The next meeting of the Tree Commission will be 9:30 a.m. 20 October, either in-person or by Zoom, depending on the governor.

**URBAN FORESTER REPORT (Erin)**

Erin has started using the bicentennial funds for tree planting. She has selected about 500 sites based on three criteria: (1) The number of vacant tree sites, (2) current vs potential canopy, and (3) socio-demographic considerations (income, minority status). George asked why tree planting is planned for spring rather than fall, when trees normally fare better. Erin said the timing depends on the funding, which will continue through 2023.

Jeff asked whether the trail will be widened around Bryan Park. Erin said there are too many mature trees whose roots would be disturbed if the trail were widened. She said the existing trail will be repaved; there are also plans for boardwalks. She said several of the “connector” trails to the workout station will be newly paved.

George commented that the trail that runs from High Street to Arden has a lot of bare ground where trees were removed. Erin said there are plans to replace those trees.

Griffy Trail loop project. Erin said lake levels were drawn down so contractors could evaluate the site. The city has received a few bids, but because of the cost of materials and labor right now, the plans will probably have to change. Improving the safety of some of the hazardous trails and a fishing pier will remain in the plan.

Laurel wanted to know how the treated ash trees have been doing. Erin said a lot of them will still need to be removed. There is still ongoing treatment, combined with some removal. She said if we wish to keep our larger ash trees, treatment may have to continue into perpetuity. Kerry says long term, ash trees will probably survive and begin to propagate again.

In response to a question from Jeff, Erin said there is no official policy on avoiding monocultures in new planting. She says she prefers a mix, but there are also advantages to restricted monoculturing in terms of maintenance. Laurel says that Bloomington’s overall inventory indicates that the city has done a pretty good job of diversifying its tree. Some tree planting is done by contractors developing new subdivisions, who tend to plant all the same species.

### **INDIANA UNIVERSITY (Mia)**

Mia reported that inventory has been completed for all nine campuses, and IU is working with the data. She praised Erin's choices of metrics for planting the bicentennial trees, and said she looked forward for IU being able to make data-driven decisions, also.

Kerry has been working with the IU team in evaluating the healthcare needs of IU's larger trees. He commented that many of these larger trees have an entire eco-system dependent upon them. Mia says the squirrels at IU have their own Facebook page.

Jeff said there are large vines growing up the trees near some of IU's sorority houses. Mia said she has a mapping of invasive species, and as resources allow, they address them. On the southwest corner of 8<sup>th</sup> & Park, there is a giant tree of heaven that needs to be removed. Mia has asked the arborists to figure out the best practice for removing that tree, thinking that the 'best practice' they come up with might be applied.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

The next meeting is tomorrow night. Dedaimia reported that the Eco-Heroes winners were selected in between the two meetings. The ceremony will be conducted online. The proposed panel discussion has been put on hold for a while.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Dedaimia Whitney**