



City of Springfield Urban Forestry Commission

Minutes

3:30 p.m. October 20, 2021

Room 203, Municipal Center West and via Zoom

The meeting was called to Order at 3:30 p.m.

In attendance were Susan Allen, Randy Belleville, Ernestine Lawrence, Amy McEuen, Scott Marlow, Jan Von Qualen, and Jeff Reim.

Randy Belleville described the MacArthur Blvd project being planned jointly by IDOT and the City. The MacArthur Blvd. Association, Mike Higgins, Nate Bottom, Kristin DiCenso, Joe McMenamin are participating in Community Advisory Group discussions with IDOT & the City about what it will look like. The project considerations include plans for upgrading the sidewalk and bike accommodations. Randy is concerned that the project includes increasing trees and green space along the Boulevard. introduced special guests Katie Davison, President of the MacArthur Boulevard Association, Mike Higgins, board member of the City's Bicycle Advisory Council, and Julie Dirksen, an interested resident.

Katie Davison is participating in the Community Advisory Group. She said the MacArthur Blvd. Association's priorities are: (1) safety (there are 4 schools on the Blvd.); (2) beautification and greenspace; and (3) infrastructure (sewer/rainwater drainage improvement because businesses flood with heavy rain).

Mike Higgins said that land acquisition is a concern because some stores go nearly to the curb. MacArthur the potential to be a recreational by-way from I-72 into the City. Mike believes it should be green and welcoming. The Advisory Group asked IDOT to look at entryways into similar communities. Scott Marlow noted that the City will be responsible for maintenance of the green space and explained the process IDOT generally goes through for project like the MacArthur Blvd project. Currently all businesses have an entry/exit.

Ideas discussed included: adding green space on both east and west sides; taking the bike accommodation out of the equation (bicyclists could use State Street, which has less traffic, to access the bike paths; trees, green spaces, and swales to mitigate flooding; a percentage of the project budget should be allocated to green space; encouraging local businesses to improve their landscaping; and consolidating entry/exits for multiple businesses.

Tyshianna Bankhead said that the Faith Coalition for the Common Good has leaders who would like to partner with the MacArthur Blvd goals.

Jan Von Qualen made a motion that each UFC Commissioner write a comment about one of the issues discussed. Scott Marlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Amy McEuen will write about swales; Randy Belleville, trees, Ernestine Lawrence, landscaping around businesses; Susan Allen, the percentage of budget for green space; Jan Von Qualen, storm water mitigation near Hy-Vee and parklets, Scott

Marlow, accommodations for SMTD users; and Jeff Reim, green space on east side of MacArthur.

There was a motion by Randy Belleville and second by Amy McEuen to hold the November meeting on November 5 at 3:30. The motion passed unanimously.

Amy McEuen made a motion to approve the September 8, 2021 Minutes. It was seconded by Ernestine Lawrence and passed unanimously.

Regarding the Morton Arboretum grant, Jeff Reim reported that the tree inventory will begin in November. Before it begins, there will be a meeting with contractor. Jeff mentioned that the Mayor has imminent plans to remove the cement and create greenspace in the 5' by 5' holes downtown.

Randy Belville discussed what bare root seedlings will be available for the Spring tree give-away. The trees will be Swamp white oak, red bud, red oak, Flowering Dogwood, and River Birch.

Jeff Reim reported that 43 tree grates have been removed and the trees have been mulched. Public works will pick up more grates in September and October after branch pick up.

Susan Allen reported that Dr. Vazquez will be unable to participate in November. It was suggested that the program by Drs. Vazquez and McEuen should take place in the spring. Randy suggested that a program by Guy Sternberg should be scheduled for the fall. It was suggested that the programs could take place at Illinois State Museum or the IDOT building.

Old Business: Randy suggested that we follow up with Ruth Oliver about a tree inventory in the six-block center area of downtown in the Spring.

New Business: Randy suggested that the UFC co-sponsor the Oakland Cemetery tree walk next fall. Regarding a parkway sycamore tree marked for removal, Jan voiced concern that although the tree was injured, it was living, and removal of the dead ash trees, which are liable to fall at any moment, should be the priority. indicated that she

Public comments. Noted above.

The next meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. on November 5, 2021.

Randy Belville made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Amy McEuen. The motion passed unanimously.