

KNOXVILLE TREE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
March 7, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Dan Steinhoff at 8:30 am. Other board members present were Charles Kwit, Sylvia McLaurin, Brian O'Connor, Charlotte Rodina, Kayla Stuart, Charles Kwit, Melissa Hinten, and Gordon Coker.

Ex-Officio members present were Kasey Krouse, Sophie Carter, Aoife Whitaker, Jessie Hillman, Tim Hester, and Melanie Overall.

Action Items for March

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- Dan made motion to approve February minutes. All in favor, none opposed.

City/UFMP Updates: Kasey Krouse

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- Tree mitigation/tree bank has been busy. There were 4 tree bank cases in February: 2000 Cumberland (3 trees), Rocky Shore (2 removals for parking lot entrance), KUB (replacement) and student housing (remove honey locust).
 - Planting season wraps up today. City staff helped with plantings. City going out to bid for contractor and suggested piggybacking with Trees Knoxville for the contractor.
 - Aoife has been working with Kasey distributing door hangers and he brought them to be passed around. Most people were receptive and only had one who wasn't. Kasey said they will do mailings and door hangers for TAEP grant plantings.
 - IRA grant submitted.
 - March 21st – UFMP implementation/release date has been changed to Dr. Walter Hardy Park, 9:00am. Will have coffee and doughnuts, with a short program. The implementation team will be introduced. Charles Kwit, Lee Rumble and Charlotte Rodina asked to be added to the team.
 - Kasey is partnering with Wes Sowers, Urban Wilderness, to help plant seedlings on the back side of the area where there are houses. Planting will be March 20th at noon. Need about 10 volunteers.

Trees Knoxville Update: Sophie Carter

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- There was a tree walk last Thursday. Kasey led, had 25 attendees.
 - Kayla is doing the April tree walk. If anyone is interested in leading one, let Sophie know. Would like to have one in March, but nothing scheduled as of now. Lee volunteered for May or June.
 - There will be a tree giveaway soon at Beardsley. More to come.
 - TVA funded tree giveaway is planned for Saturday, April 20th to coincide with Earth Day on the 22nd. Looking at Caswell Park to give away 200 seedlings. She wants to make it a big city-wide event. Tim suggested getting with David McGinley (Stormwater Engineering).
 - Planting season has wrapped up.

- Sophie is working on final count of trees. There is a map on website showing where planted.
- Melissa Hinten is the new Executive Director of Trees Knoxville and will start after the end of the UT spring semester.
- Sylvia added Sophie does a great job organizing the plantings. The volunteers have so much fun. She also asked if anyone follows up on the trees planted at schools. Kerstin and Preston are working on that (Trees Knoxville Education Committee). Dan stated the mayor came to a planting and got involved. Brian stated one of the recent school plantings was next to a planting done a few years ago.

Education Update: Gordon Coker

- Gordon and Sylvia recently did a survey. Half of the people were interested in tree ordinances, planting trees (and care), and monetary value. Positive remarks on educating children, climate change, tree education at Botanical Gardens, tree hunt for children, contest for identifying largest tree, to name a few. Also questioned whether trees will ever grow at Riverside landfill.
- The City planted 7 trees at Gill. Gordon has received a lot of positive comments.
- They are developing an arboretum in the Gill area. The tags are ready to be placed.
- City funds have to be used to plant on city owned property. The IRA funds can be used to plant at locations other than city owned property, Justice 40 locations, which is based on census tract.
- Gordon has March article due tomorrow. Charles has article due 3/22.
- Discussion about partnering with KCDC to plant trees at Western Heights. Won't be ready for trees for another year or so.
- Dan hosts a quarterly tree walk at the Botanical Gardens, highlighting pollinators, and is open to anyone. Lee offered to assist, if needed.
- Kasey said the UFMP is on the website and encourages implementation committee to look at it. Jessie stated the Planning Commission does not need to adopt the plan but City Council needs to adopt. They will endorse once City Council adopts.

Ex-Officio Reports and Others

- Jessie stated Advance Knox has been adopted but facing some challenges with hillside protection. There are some misinterpretations, so being questioned. Need to look at it for changes to be able to enforce. There are exemptions prior to code being adopted in 2020.
- Kayla stated county ordinances to not recognize notable trees. TN Champion Tree is now open for nomination and will remain open until about the end of April – limited to 100 trees.
- Jessie asked if tree protection ordinance has been submitted. Kasey said they are getting close.
- Tim stated this is his last Tree Board meeting, due to retirement. Aaron Browning will attend until Tim's replacement is hired.
- Lee gave update on 2/19 tree pruning at Pond Gap. They did a great job cleaning up to get ready to prune. The next one is scheduled for April 1st. Tree pruning scheduled for 3/8 and 4/18 at Beardsley. BLOOM planting was Monday at Beverly Park. Planted 110 native species to reduce mowing. Tarleton is done. Signage is up. They are meeting monthly.
- Jessie announced the new Sustainability Director (Vasu Primlani) will begin April 1st. Need to invite her to Earth Day event at Caswell.

- Ben was unable to attend but sent in email update from Ijams. Weed Wrangle '24 was a success with 4 participating sites and around 80 volunteers! 35th Annual Ijams River Rescue is this Saturday. They are wrapping up several grants which include planting elements. Should be completed by end of March. Ijams is hiring!

https://www.ijams.org/_files/ugd/05d175_a095733b2ec347cc8da8187453d54cc1.pdf

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 am.

Upcoming Events

- March 8th, 1:00-3:30 pm – Apple and pear tree pruning at Beardsley
- March 21, 9:00am – UFMP release event at Dr. Walter Hardy Park, 1917 Bethel Avenue
- April 18th, 1:00-3:0pm – Stone fruit tree pruning at Beardsley
- April 20th, Earth Day event at Caswell Park