

1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605
ARBOR COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 9, 2024, 8:15-10:15 AM
MINUTES

Present: Jay Barnes, Mary Blackstone, Teresa Davis, Iain Drummond,
Jamie Lambert, Tabatha White

Staff: Adam Wilson

Regrets: Casey Hanson

- 1. Call to Order**--Tabatha White called the meeting together at 8:30AM
- 2. Adoption of Minutes of August 5, 2024** Moved M. Blackstone, Seconded I. Drummond, Carried unanimously.
- 3. Staff Comments or Clarifications**
 - The City has received formal notice of full funding of \$173,000 in response to its application for an Inflation Reduction Act Urban and Community Forestry Grant. M. Blackstone has spoken with J. Santerre, who runs this program, for clarification re expectations and timelines given the 2 month delay in getting the results and formal award out to us. She urged us to stick with the work plan--including an application to the Community Tree Stewards program for 2025 which is due in just a week's time. This will give the City a full-time employee with forestry credentials for nearly a year with the specific focus of laying the foundation for successful implementation of the IRA grant and engaging with the work of the Arbor Commission more broadly.
 - The Tree Ordinance committee has received input on the draft tree ordinance from the City Planner.
 - A. Wilson requested that the Tree Ordinance committee make an appointment with him to go over the Tree Warden job description--The City will support a staff member, Caleb Pelletier to undertake

training over the fall and winter to prepare him for arborist and IPM recertification/certification. M. Blackstone requested that the Arbor Commission see his cv or resume.

- Staff Support for Commission-- It is intended that Caleb Pelletier will be the staff representative to the Arbor Commission. M. Blackstone asked who would be able to supervise the Community Tree Steward that is provided for in the new IRA grant. A. Wilson noted that he would be able to do that if the person is not required to have forestry credentials. M. Blackstone will check on that.

4. Citizen Comments. None

5. Report from City Council. None

6. Action Item Reports/Decisions

- Constitution of Staff/Commission Project Management Committee to oversee and integrate the work plans for ongoing maintenance and planting, the Project Canopy Grant work plan, and the Urban and Community Forestry work plan. Committee mandate is to keep the Commission informed and up to date and to complete projects as planned on time and on budget. The Committee will consist of M. Blackstone, T. Davis, I. Drummond, C. Hanson, T. White, A. Wilson. It will hold a special meeting on August 30 at 8:15AM. T. White will find out if the Council Chamber is available. A. Wilson will set up online calendars for laying out a work schedule, including the Project Canopy Grant pilot planting on High Street this November. T. White asked if the City can help with the digging and transportation of nursery trees for that project. A. Wilson responded that the City has the equipment to pick up and transport the trees and help with the tree planting. In light of IRA proposed plantings along Card Brook and the trailer park there, J. Lambert noted that Route One at 212 High Street which abuts Card Brook has just lost an elm and they are interested in planting trees. M. Blackstone noted that we need to also include regular care and maintenance in the schedule--for instance, the IRA grant includes winter pruning in the work plan. A. Wilson noted that the city crew is heavily engaged in snow plowing all winter. It may be necessary to contract with someone to do the

work. I. Drummond noted that he has experience leading volunteers in care and pruning of municipal trees and he would be willing to do that in Ellsworth.

- Public education event--Beech Leaf Disease Program: Plant Pathologist, Dr. Matthew Borden, DPM from Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories in Charlotte, NC will speak on Beech Leaf Disease, what it is, what treatments are available, and when it's a good option for home and landowners to utilize this treatment. Sept 19 at 3-5PM at the University of Maine Extension Office. This will cost \$ 25 to be expended from the Commission budget.
- November memorial tree planting: M. Blackstone requested clarification as to why the tree at Knowlton Park (which this will replace) died. Is there irrigation in place for this tree. If not it will be important to make sure it is watered regularly for three years in order to assure its survival. A. Willson will have the location of the irrigation marked when the irrigation is blown out this fall so that we will know in future which areas are covered. M. Blackstone suggested that it will be important to have a tree sponsorship program in place by the time that the memorial planting happens in November so that it can be advertised in conjunction with the planting. This will entail setting up a Tree Trust for charitable donations. M. Blackstone presented a draft description of a potential program with various levels of donations and tree plantings including the cost of a granite marker. General input was that the levels of contributions needed to be raised to allow for the cost of maintenance of the tree and stone. M. Blackstone will pursue this further and asked for input via the google drive.
- Commission membership: T. Davis will reach out to Mike Jensen. A. Wilson suggested someone from the Beth Wright Center which has an interest in plantings at their site. M. Blackstone suggested that we consider people who would replace the expertise of people that have stepped down. For instance, we have lost a professional forester from a land trust and the owner of a High Street business at a time when we are about to do plantings and contribute to a

complete street plan there. I. Drummond will ask about interest from Bar Harbor Banking and Trust. T. White will ask at FBC and at Machias Savings Bank.

- Overall Commission Work Plan/Agenda for 2024-2025 relative to Commission and Public Works Budgets: This needs to be the primary focus for our next meeting. At the same time we should institute a regular financial report at each meeting in order to keep track of what has and hasn't been spent. A. Wilson will need to provide an accounting of the Trees section of the Public Works budget, and T. White will need to provide an accounting of the Commission budget.

7. Committee Reports

- **Tree Ordinance/Tree Warden Job Description:** The Committee will update the Tree Warden Job Description after meeting with A. Wilson and Commission members should then review the revision.
- The Tree Ordinance Feedback from M. Williams will be posted on the google drive and Commission members should review it there. The Commission needs to look carefully at changes to the ordinance necessitated by the staffing and budgets which evolved out of the 2025 budget process.
- **Forest Management Plan:** This Committee has not met because of member availability and time required by other commission activities such as grant applications.
- **Work Schedule for Information** (Timelines, Deadlines)
- Budget Proposals for 2025 (submitted and presented to Council April 2024; follow up communications/meetings with City Manager necessary in light of Fall budget review)
- Project Canopy Grant Application (submitted May 15, 2024/received)
- Inflation Reduction Act Urban & Community Forestry Grant (submitted May 15, 2024/received)
- Community Tree Steward application (submitted for September 16, 2024, pending)
- Revised Tree Ordinance (sent for consultation in May; finalize for submission to Council October 2024)

- Tree Warden Job Description (March 6, 2024 to City Manager/Council; resent after arrival of new city manager; resent July 2024)
- Submission of Arbor Day Proclamation to Mayor (proclaimed February 12, 2024)
- Submission of Tree City USA 2024 application (submitted December 2024)
- Community Tree Nursery Input on Ordering & Planting for 2025
- Finalize City of Ellsworth Forestry Management Plan (first full review by Commission January 2025)
- Plan Public Education Programming for 2024-2025 (Chestnut Program, April 2024; Beech Leaf Disease Program September 2024; other on White Pine, to remove or not?)
- Arbor Day/Maine Arbor Week 2025 Plan Activities (?)

9. Member Comments/Other Business: None.

10. Next Meeting: Oct 7, 2024 8:15-10:15AM: M. Blackstone and J. Barnes send their regrets for this meeting.

11. Adjournment: I. Drummond moved/ M. Blackstone seconded.
10:30AM