

City of Hot Springs
Urban Forestry Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Annex Conference Room, City Hall

Members Attending:

Ed French, James Moore, Roxana Wallace, and Regine Skelton

City of Hot Springs Staff Attending: Allen Bates (Urban Forester), Ronald Sievwright (Public Works Director), Freddy Padilla (Urban Forestry Crew), and Candace Shepherd (Public Works)

The meeting was called to order by Ed French at 5:30 p.m.

Committee Business Section:

1. *Roll call*
2. *Approval of Agenda:* The agenda was approved.
3. *Approval of Minutes:* The minutes from the January meeting were approved.
4. *Recognition of Guests:* None

New Business:

5. *Replant Kimery Park:*
Allen reported that in October 2022 he planted 27 Green Giant Arborvitae at Kimery Park for screening as recommended. Due to Arborvitae Sudden Death, he lost 24 of them. They were losing water from their leaves faster than they could take in due to the heat. The vendor, Bemis Tree, agreed to replace them. They were replaced with Eastern Red Cedar.
6. *Project Updates:*
Allen gave updates on projects at the Church Street parking lot, Velocity Park, and the Malvern Gateway. He reported that roses were added to the rain garden in the middle of the Church Street parking lot. The green spaces are being cleaned out in three corners of the lot, and he will be planting trees soon. At Velocity Park, they are waiting for a tunnel to be repaired so they can pave the parking lot. As soon as that is paved, he can begin the landscaping. For the Malvern Gateway, he is expanding the landscaping he did in front of the Police Station towards Church Street.
7. *2023 Arbor Day:*
Allen reported that they had a really good Arbor Day last Friday. There were over 250 students that attended it at Entergy Park. The day started with the mayor reading the Arbor Day proclamation. Then there was a tree planting event where a tree was spaded in. After that, the students rotated every 20 minutes through eight different stations.
8. *Tree Giveaways:*
Regine informed the group that the AR Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division hosted three free tree giveaways. They were in Sheridan, Hot Springs, and Arkadelphia and included many fruit trees. Allen reported that the City's Urban Forestry Division and Stormwater Division hosted a tree giveaway today at the Garland County Library and gave away 500 trees. Mostly Mulberry, Persimmon, and Bald Cypress trees were given out at the City event.

Sub-Committee Reports Section:

9. *Marketing and Education:*

a. *Ask Allen Blog*

Allen announced he now has a blog. Public Information set up a blog for Allen to help answer all the questions that are asked by the public. It can be found on the City's website under the Urban Forestry division. In order to ask Allen a question, someone can just email AskAllen@cityhs.net.

b. *Pruning Class at Family Park*

Allen shared that he held a pruning class on March 15, 2023, with the help of Luke Duffle from the Cooperative Extension Service. They pruned 4-5 fruit trees and demonstrated how to train a tree.

c. *Stormwater Training*

Allen explained that Hot Springs is the only city in Arkansas that offers Stormwater Certification training. Any commercial project in Hot Springs must have a certified stormwater inspector on it, so many contractors send personnel for training. Allen does a 30-minute session that covers the portion of the training about tree preservation at the construction site. He oversees the Landscape Ordinance for the City and covers the Landscape code in the class.

10. *Tree City USA:*

Allen reported that Hot Springs received its 23rd year recognition as a Tree City.

Other Business:

11. *Consider Urban Forestry Working Crew Report:*

Freddy reported that they are currently bushhogging. He has two crews running. They are also working on removing hazardous trees around town. They will be pruning the City side of Central Avenue along bathhouse row to help prepare for the paving to be done.

12. *Consider Advisory Committee Members' Items for Discussion:*

Roxana asked about the plan to put soccer fields over at Linden Park. Allen referred her to talk to Anthony Whittington in the Parks and Trails Department.

Adjournment:

Ed adjourned meeting at 6:18 p.m.

The next meeting is Tuesday, July 25th, 2023, at 5:30 pm in the Annex Conference room.