



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board Minutes

*August 6, 2020
held at Park Operations*

Item 1: Meeting came to Order by Susan Carter, at 8:37 AM.

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

- Bennett Boeschstein
- Susan Carter
- Mollie Higginbotham
- Kamie Long
- Paul Morency
- Vince Urbina
- Tom Ziola

Absent Board Members:

Parks & Recreation Staff Present: Rob Davis, City Forester & Open Space Supervisor
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

Item 2: Approve Minutes for July Forestry Advisory Board Meeting

Kamie Long made a motion to approve the minutes.

The motion was seconded by Paul Morency and approved unanimously.

Item 3: Forestry Updates

- a) (Pictures attached) New insect found on a sycamore at 7th and Hill
 - Found a fact sheet from New Mexico that identifies the bug as a leaf hopper.
 - Based on prevalence in that tree there may be more around the city.
- b) Outstanding 2019 Pruning requests should be completed by the end of August.
- c) Grand Valley Champion Trees Reviewed by Neal Barmesberger (pictures attached). Trees on the 10 year renewal list were measured and placed:
 - Zelkova (Cemetery) - 1st
 - Weeping Cherry (Cemetery) – Tied for 2nd
 - Hardy Rubbertree (Cemetery) – Tied for 1st
 - Black Ash (Cemetery) - 2nd
 - White Mulberry (Cemetery) – 2nd
 - Mimosa (private) – 1st
 - Chinese Pistache – 1st

- d) Paul, Brian, Kylie and Rob talked to the STARS camp kids about the value of trees, and the harm caused by vandalism. Hope to make it a recurring program each year so that all the camp kids grow up being tree advocates. In non-COVID years the presentation may be expanded to include chainsaws, bucket trucks, ropes and information about careers.
- i) Also, the Department sent a press release regarding some particularly notable instances of vandalism in parks including the complete destruction of some trees, one memorial tree (a weeping crab apple which was part of a grant application for the Lincoln Park playground) in particular.
- e) Heat and lack of natural precipitation is creating lots of stress in the trees around the city.
- Staff is noticing more and more landscapes are transitioning to xeric and removing irrigation to street trees. (160 removals in 2019 – 60% were ROW trees that were not watered.)
 - The CSU Extension office is using “water-wise” rather than xeric language, and emphasizing the right plant/right place philosophy
 - Irrigation systems that were not turned on this spring has also created some issues and tree loss.
- f) Lots of information was gathered at the PROS Plan Meetings, and staff is working through next steps. Rob wants to ensure there is 1 tree question on the statistically valid survey that will be sent out.
- g) CDOT is still adjusting the plan for I-70B/1st and Grand Ave. CDOT would like to widen the area to 3 lanes, City Council only wants 2 lanes. 3 lanes would remove all the trees/ sidewalks. Urban Trails, along with Forestry, is also advocating for the lower traffic alternative of 2 lanes.
- h) Rob has been contacted by the Grand Junction Rotary who would like to do a planting, similar to Canyon View, at Las Colonias. A planting there would be more complicated due to availability of irrigation and plantable space. Joe Brown (Horticulture Supervisor), Randy Coleman and Rob will be meeting with Rotary for further discussion.
- i) Westlake CDBG funding was approved and \$5000 was earmarked for trees (this also happens to be where a lot of vandalism has occurred recently).
- j) RiversEdge West (formerly the Tamarisk Coalition), are undertaking a quarterly volunteer project. On August 20 they will be working on mitigating tamarisk at Las Colonias from the boat ramp westward towards Watson Island. They are partnering with Xcel Energy’s Volunteer Day.
- k) Rob reviewed the landscape plans for Dos Rios. The plans were approved prior to any Park Staff approval. The Engineer was receptive to Rob’s suggestions, including some important notes about plantings under electric transmission lines, and tree species in planting strips that have fleshy fruit which will drop on the sidewalk and cause other problems. Park staff is hoping for more back and forth with the landscape architect in the future.
- l) Rob is having a meeting with Community Development regarding plan review process. He hopes to be involved in the planning process earlier to mitigate impacts on parks and right of way trees.

- m) The 2021 Budget submission deadline was August 4. Departments were asked to cut operating budgets by 15% overall. Parks and Recreation has 7 vacancies (2 irrigation techs, 1 crew leader, 1 arborist, 2 administrative assistants, 1 superintendent (recreation), and expect between 2 and 3 retirements over the next months.
- The Aquaponics experiment was about 60% successful, though the real test will be how they thrive after planted.
 - i. Hackberries were about 50/50
 - ii. Oaks did not work at all
 - iii. Sycamores came in well

Item 4: New Business

a) CSU Update

- Offering an early retirement package, and also are under a hiring freeze
- CSU may be redoing the regions
- Additional budget concerns as all Extension funds are raised (not appropriated), usually through the Plant Sale. Currently working on modifying the sale so can still raise funds for a 1/2 -time employee.
- Obtained a \$50K grant for a Ute Garden which needs to be spent by December

b) Grand Valley Canopy

- Meeting to update the list including information about planting, pruning, watering, care and insects/disease.

c) Kamie let Fruita and Palisade know about the upcoming ISA test. Both organizations responded with some interest. Susan will reach out to Montrose as they have had some turnover.

Item 5: Public Comments: No Public Comments

Item 6: Adjourn: The meeting adjourned to the tree tour by acclimation at 9:59 a.m.

Item 7. Next Forestry Advisory Board Meeting: Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 8:30am at **the CSU Extension Office (Mesa County Fairgrounds)** – we'll meet outside.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Little
Administrative Specialist