



## *Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board Minutes*

*September 2, 2021  
held Parks Operations Office*

**Meeting called to Order** by Mollie Higginbotham, at 8:32 AM.

### Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Bennett Boeschstein  
Mollie Higginbotham  
Kamie Long  
Paul Morency  
Chuck McDaniel, Mayor  
Vince Urbina

Absent Board Members:

Susan Carter  
Tom Ziola

Guests Present:

Rich Edwards

Parks & Recreation Staff Present:

Rob Davis, City Forester & Open Space Supervisor  
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

**Approve Minutes** for July 1 Forestry Advisory Board Meeting.

Kamie Long made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 1 meeting, noting a typo in Jason Martinez' title, and that Meredith from the Colorado State Extension took another position and is not retiring. The motion was seconded by Mollie Higginbotham and carried unanimously.

### **Forestry Updates**

#### **a) 2021 city-wide ash treatment program**

Ash trees have been marked with either a green or black dot. Black dots indicate removal; green dots indicate treatment. Around 2500 ash trees have been treated with Dinotefuran. This product is safe for re-entry as soon as it is dry. Rob Davis shared some pictures of ash trees which have historically been treated compared to trees which have not been treated. There is a marked difference in the health of untreated trees. Trunk injections begin in September for trees 25" and larger. These trees will be on a three-year treatment rotation. 163 of 201 trees slated for removal this year are ash trees. Board members wondered about replanting. Staff evaluates planting areas for clear signs of stewardship, and the existence of automatic irrigation.

**b) 2021 City Manager Response Plan**

Due to promotions to other areas of the department, Forestry had zero full-time arborists near the beginning of pruning season early in the year. One seasonal was promoted and two additional arborists were hired to replace the promoted employees. A fourth arborist has just been hired. Staff were authorized to rent an additional aerial and chipper and Project crew staff has been assisting to shore up the crews and help work through a large number of trimming requests. Additionally, replacement of the grapple truck is being expedited so the equipment will be in place as soon as possible to further expedite removals. Alpine Tree Service has an existing on-call contract which is also being utilized to take care of some pruning work requests.

**c) Significant Tree Loss on west side of N 7<sup>th</sup>, Tiger Ave to Orchard**

Staff removed a large number of trees on the west side of N 7<sup>th</sup>.

**d) Fall Tree Planting**

Staff is beginning to plan for fall tree planting. Currently there are 50 properties requesting new street trees.

**e) Xcel Foundation Grant Update**

Rob advised the board that he was contacted by the Xcel Foundation because a couple of other cities were unable to follow through with their grant awards and they noticed we had spent more than our grant amount on planting. Rob is hoping for an additional \$2000 - \$4000 in grant funding for nursery stock.

**f) Valley Grown Nursery**

Rob is meeting with Valley Grown Nursery about inventory ideas so that he can share what has grown well, and any species we are hoping or expecting to plant in the future.

**g) Fire 3 Construction**

Construction on the new Fire Station near Pomona elementary is beginning. Staff have identified a number of trees to be protected during the construction process.

**h) Canopy Assessment**

Staff is using the canopy assessment to drive planting decisions downtown. There was a request to replace a tree with art. The canopy assessment shows 1% plantable space in that area. With data from the assessment identifying such limited plantable areas, art should really be placed in areas which are not plantable.

**i) North American Training Solutions**

The City is going to pay the upfront cost to bring in North American Training Solutions to offer some continuing education for our staff. Extra spaces in the class have been offered to other arborists to help off-set the cost of providing the training to city staff.

**j) Western Slope Pest Meeting Update**

ISA CEUs were offered for attending, and it was a great opportunity to bring everyone together to provide information. There was a table full of samples for folks to get a look at. The next meeting is in March and will be held the last Wednesday of the month.

## **New Business**

### **a) Forestry Board Member's Terms Expiring**

Terms expire November 30, 2021. Applications are open through September 30, 2021. The Board has been asked to provide a letter of qualifications for new board members. Members with terms expiring are: Susan Carter, Mollie Higginbotham, Paul Morency, Vince Urbina, and Tom Ziola. Paul Morency and Tom Ziola have chosen not to reapply.

### **b) Preservation of Ash Trees Diameter Size Class Selection**

Rob solicited feedback from the board regarding the size of ash trees which should be treated. Grand Junction has chosen 25", Denver treated 12" trees and larger, Chicago treats 8" trees.

### **c) Education and Outreach**

The board talked about a plan to continue education and outreach about trees, their benefits, watering practices, and other important outreach.

Mayor McDaniel shared with the board that the Council is looking for a 12-person committee to provide feedback on how the American Rescue Plan Funds should be spent. The Mayor also shared that a citizen had complimented and appreciated the work staff were doing on trees around the city.

## **Public Comment**

Rich Edwards joined the meeting to bring his concerns over the number of right of way planting areas which are being converted to gravel by home owners. Mr. Edwards wondered if the Forestry Board is the right group to work on education about what is required to maintain trees in the planting strips, and who is responsible to maintain them, as well as about the differences between xeric and zero scape. Mr. Edwards also wondered if an easement improvement program could be created. The issue appears to be worse when properties are rented. Board members discussed having Ciara DePinto, the marketing specialist for the Parks and Recreation Department, attend the next meeting to talk about strategies for getting the word out. Other ideas for outreach included educating through realtors, the Welcome to Grand Junction group, reminders in City water bills, and reaching out to HOAs.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 10:41 AM.

## **Next Forestry Advisory Board Meeting**

Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 8:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist