



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board Minutes

October 20, 2022

Meeting called to Order by Susan Carter, at 8:33 AM.

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Susan Carter
Mollie Higginbotham
Dan Komlo
Vince Urbina

Board Members Absent:

Bennett Boeschenstein
Bill Cooper
Kamie Long
Chuck McDaniel

Guests

Rich Edwards
Tanya Travis

City Staff Present:

Rob Davis, Parks Supervisor, Forestry and Open Space
Lance Gloss, Senior Planner
Felix Landry, Senior Planner
Kalli Savvas, Associate Planner
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

Approve Minutes

Vince Urbina moved to approve the minutes of the September meeting. The motion was seconded by Mollie Higginbotham and carried unanimously.

Development Code Landscape Regulations Update

Felix Landry gave the board an update on the revisions of the Development Code Landscape Regulations. At the October 5 meeting City Council felt more revisions were necessary before adoption. Felix shared with the board some of the changes that have been made. Susan Carter noted that noxious species are defined by the state and believes that difference should be reflected in the landscape code. A change has been made to the suitable plants list. Instead of having a “prohibited” list which really only defines trees which are not significant, they have been added to the suitable plant list but listed as excluded from the significant tree list. Rob Davis suggested adding a column to the suitable plant list which indicates truly prohibited plants (Russian olive, tamarisk, plants that won’t grow well here like aspen, globe willow). The ordinance would indicate that 50% of trees must be from the suitable plant list and no plants

can be from the prohibited list. In the future, the plant list can be changed administratively without a public hearing. If the change is non-contentious it can just be made. If there is disagreement between the plant community and the developer community it may need to go to council via memo or workshop for feedback.

Another revision requires an irrigation professional to sign off on landscape plans. Requirements for certification will be phased in, and this change has the support of the development community. The ordinance addresses adjusting setbacks or minimum parking to aid in the preservation of significant trees. The board suggested including shifting landscape beds to aid in the preservation of significant trees as well. Significant trees must be replaced with 3 caliper inches per 5 caliper inches removed. If trees can not be replaced they must pay the appraised value of the tree. The Board supports the changes and appreciates the work done by staff to make compromises that are acceptable to both the development community and those advocating for the protection of natural resources.

Urban Forestry Master Plan

Lance Gloss, is working on an Urban Forestry Plan for the City of Grand Junction. Urban forestry plans often include a conditions assessment (of the existing canopy, level of services/staffing levels) and in our case may include an assessment of the city limits versus persigo boundaries as well as the regulatory environment and the wild/urban interface. The City's comprehensive plan calls for an urban forestry plan, it is addressed in the PROS plan, and there will likely be tie-ins to the City sustainability plan which will be completed over the next eighteen months.

Lance is reviewing best practices of similar cities for approach, as well as similarities and strategies to avoid. There are five elements a plan can provide: information, policies (to navigate uncertainties), strategies (long term pathways), designs (micro or macro, to accomplish goals), and agendas (tables, to do lists, timeframes). Other things to consider including are priority topics (canopy extent and distribution), risks (wildland urban interface, pests, and drought), levels of service, partnerships, funding, staffing, pruning and maintenance schedules, and regulations.

Board members are interested in recommending different canopy levels for different sections of the Grand Junction area based on land use (for example, lower at the airport) and soils (salty composition in the area of 23 rd), as well as other considerations such as water provider (Ute versus City). Board members mentioned that partners are critical to the success of this plan, nursery professionals, tree professionals, and also realtors.

Public Comments

Tanya Travis thanked the board for the opportunity to work on the arboretum project. The volunteers loved working on the arboretum, the weather was great and the refreshed posts and plates look really great. Tanya has brought the stain and hardware for storage by the Forestry division. Rob would like to increase the signage at the first tree to help up the visibility of the arboretum.

Rich Edwards talked with the board about the website GJTrees.org. The domain came up for renewal, so he has worked to get the website up and running. Rich is seeking comments and feedback for the site. It is a citizens initiative right now with info on right of way trees with the aim of raising awareness and making information available.

Forestry Updates

Forestry staff are caught up on citizen requests. There are a large number of removals pending, but most of those were identified by staff rather than requested by citizens.

Rob shared with the board pictures of the old Wells Fargo drive through on Ute Ave. All the trees, save one, are under the 25" threshold staff had settled on for treatment of City trees. All the trees (except the one 25" trunk injected tree) are failing despite having received two trunk spray treatments. The trunk injected tree is doing really well. Staff has evaluated the inventory and found that 2200 street trees and 600 park trees are ash trees. Of those, 1093 are in the 13 – 24" class. Staff are working to add these trees to the trunk injection program. Additionally, staff is shifting unused rebate money to treat ROW trees adjacent to houses (which people often consider their own trees anyway). This has allowed an additional 70 trees to be treated. The ash treatment program wrapped up last week, utilizing the full budget.

Christmas light installation began this week. The four City arborists were new last year and this year, since they are more familiar and comfortable with the process, it is proceeding much more quickly. The design includes additional lights this year and staff hopes to complete the install in half the time. It should be an impressive display this year.

Vince Urbina reminded everyone that the last West Slope emerging pests meeting of the year is next week.

Susan Carter updated on the board on Japanese Beetle awareness and education efforts. Extension staff are still working to gain support from Council and County Commissioners. A chemical treatment has been found that is safe and may even be more effective than drying down.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by acclamation 10:20 am

Next Forestry Advisory Board Meeting - Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 8:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist