



Grand Junction Forestry Advisory Board Minutes

May 9, 2024

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Joseph Chandler
Bill Cooper
Mollie Freilicher
Mollie Higginbotham
Brandon Kanwischer
Kamie Long
Scott Beilfuss

Board Members Absent:

Dan Komlo

Guests Present:

Tanya Travis

City Staff Present:

Jamie Beard, Assistant City Attorney
Jenny Nitzky, Sustainability Coordinator
Rob Davis, Parks Supervisor, Forestry and Open Space
Allison Little Administrative Specialist

Meeting called to order by Kamie Long at 8:00AM.

Approval of the April Minutes

Mollie Higginbotham made a motion to accept the April minutes. Joe Chandler seconded the motion which was accepted by acclamation.

Kamie Long introduced herself to the new Council Representative, Scott Beilfuss, and gave a brief history of the Board. Board members introduced themselves to Councilor Beilfuss. The Council has shifted liaison responsibilities and he will be the new liaison to the Forestry Advisory Board.

The Forestry (formerly Education) Subcommittee meeting will take up the future revisions of Chapter 8. The next meeting of the Education Committee 5/23 at 9am.

Chapter 8 Review

Jamie Beard talked with the board about the ongoing revision of Chapter 8 working on section 8.32.130 – License required. Jamie advised the board of the code and state stipulations of the Worker's Compensation coverage portion of the licensing requirement. Worker's Comp is required, unless the company owner is the only employee and then it can be waived through a process with the City Attorney's Office and also by filing the rejection of coverage with the State.

The temporary services in town don't generally have coverage so using them as employees does not meet the requirement. Picking up leaves is one thing but holding a ladder, or holding a tool when Code

Compliance drives by is harder to tell what work that person is actually being asked to perform. Rob reminded the board that that tree care workers are working in one of the most dangerous industries.

Board members wondered if requiring worker comp for these single employee companies would be a financial barrier. Board members talked about the balance between protecting people and supporting small businesses. Jamie reminded the board that the homeowner can incur costs for underinsured people performing work. The board has made some of these licensing decisions to raise the level of professionalism and protect homeowners. Jamie Beard will do some numbers checking and the board will revisit this issue.

NOAA Urban Heat Island & Sustainability and Adaptation Plan

Jenny Nitzky, Sustainability coordinator, introduced herself to the board. Jenny advised the board that Grand Junction has been chosen as one of 14 Cities who will be a part of the Urban Heat Island Mapping Campaigns. This will be a comprehensive study of the 42.5 sq miles of City Limits. They are looking for 45 – 60 volunteers to help at three times during one specific day to map the heat.

We select points of interest and NOAA creates ten routes. A driver and a navigator who holds a sensor out the window to gather data. (This can be family friendly – as long as the navigator can hold the sensor out the window, even a kid could participate.) Staff have identified July 27 as the target date and two back-up days in case the weather does not cooperate (August 3 or August 17). June 2 is Heat Awareness Day and the volunteer gathering campaign will be launched on that day.

At the end we'll have a map of our city and where the hottest/coolest parts are and we will have more information about where we need more trees, shaded bus stops, or cooling centers. Board members wondered how to connect people with the opportunity to volunteer. The program launches 6/2 on Engage GJ and they can fill out the volunteer interest form there.

Jenny shared with the board that the City is LEED Silver certified. They have been gathering different data points for a year and did use some of the tree canopy data that Forestry has collected.

Jenny talked with the board about the Sustainability and Adaptation Plan. Staff have done significant community engagement to find out what the focus areas should be. The plan is in the public comment time on engageGJ.org right now. The Focus Areas are: Built Environment, Climate Resilience, Energy Stewardship, Waste Management, Water Conservation, and City Leadership. The plan consists of 12 goals, 87 strategies, and priority actions which are the nearest term.

Once the public comment is collected, the plan will go to a City Council Workshop on June 3 and staff are hoping for Council Adoption at the July 3 meeting.

Arbor Day and Tree Seedling Distribution Review

Rob talked with the board about the Arbor Day activities. Board members shared that the kid's climbing was very popular and more waivers are needed. They also noted that the larger sizes of shirts (XXXL and XXL were the first to go and people asked for children's sizes.

The silent auctions do have room for improvement. One person walked away without paying and one tree was never picked up. Tanya suggested laminated cards that people could take to "redeem" their trees after payment. The same process could be used for urban wood. People have taken to holding the clipboard the last 5 minutes of the auction to prevent other folks from bidding. Staff will work on a creative way to even the stakes for everyone. The "buy it now" price worked well for Urban Wood.

Board members suggested advertising bringing your tree questions with pictures to give the folks answering questions as much information as possible when answering questions. Other feedback includes adding more information on the tree tag about what the price tag means. Kids at the climbing tree were asking lots of questions. A Museum of the West employee approached the Board about making another tree cookie with a more in-depth history of the valley.

Board members discussed editing the latest version of the All Star tree list. Does it need to include all 5 cultivars of Juniper? Could we add or remove other information. Or include a “things to look for” section. It’s a popular handout for the extension office and it would be good to have a more final version for handing out at the Farmer’s market.

Next Meeting: June 6 at 8:30am

The Board will need to reschedule the 7/4 meeting.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,
Ali Little
Administrative Specialist