

City of Hot Springs
Urban Forestry Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Annex Conference Room, City Hall

Members Attending:

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

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 April meeting were approved.
4. *Recognition of Guests:* None

New Business:

5. *Planting at Wade Street Park:*
Allen reported that four Shumard Oak trees were spaded in at Wade Street Park. They were there for about a week when one of them got scorched by a fire at the playground near it. Someone set the mulch on fire. Allen went back and scratched the surface, and it seemed to still be green. He thinks it will survive.
6. *Planting at Skate Park:*
Allen said there used to be some trees there that shaded the park on the south side. He had to have three of the trees removed this year because they died. There has been some talk about putting up a shade cloth to provide shade. He had the Street Department prepare four holes for new Shumard Oak trees about a month ago, but the tree company's truck broke down. Those trees should be in the ground in the next couple of weeks.
7. *Linden Park Trees for New Playground:*
Allen reported that the new playground was dedicated last week at Linden Park. Previously, they removed some of the Sweet Gum trees, and Allen replaced them with three Willow Oak trees. He is going to continue with four more Willow Oak trees around the new playground.
8. *Grand Avenue Trees Defoliation and Response:*
Allen reported that there are a few of things going on with the Oak trees in the medians on Grand Avenue. Every year we have the Variable Oakleaf Caterpillar, but about every six years there is an outbreak. The caterpillar defoliates the trees, but normally the trees survive. Another issue is the erosion under the trees due to grass not growing in the shade. He is going to try to plant tall Fescue grass that is a winter perennial. With irrigation, it should last year-round. Finally, Allen reported on the Lecanium Scale problem on the trees. He ordered a systemic last year and used it with good results, so he has ordered more to apply this year. All these issues are due to the stress of the trees. Ed suggested that

Allen put out some type of public release to explain what is going on with the tree defoliation around town.

Sub-Committee Reports Section:

9. *Marketing and Education:*

Allen reported that recent education included more Stormwater training sessions.

10. *Tree City USA:*

Allen announced that another Arbor Day event will take next Spring at Entergy Park.

Other Business:

11. *Consider Urban Forestry Working Crew Report:*

Freddy reported that they wrapped bushhogging. They began pruning trees about two weeks ago, but the bucket truck had issues. They've been clearing around street signs and stop lights in the meantime. They will pick back up with pruning when they get the bucket truck back tomorrow. They will also do some pruning along Central Avenue.

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

Roxana presented a recyclable pocket ashtray.

Regine suggested that the City purchase a wood mizer to use to slab out large logs from tree removals.

Adjournment:

Ed adjourned meeting at 6:15 p.m.

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the Annex Conference room.

Minutes approved:

Signature

Approval Date