



Urban & Community Forestry Council

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual

Date: 10/30/24



Roll call

Present for the Council (council):

- Asia Dowtin
- Heather Griffin (Vice Chair)
- Paul Hickman
- Alec Smith
- Lee Mueller (Chair)
- Doug Schultz
- Gerry Santoro

Present for the DNR Staff (department)

- Grace Bianchi
- Kerry Gray
- Kevin Sayers
- Daphna Gadoth
- Lawrence Sobson
- Andrea Stay

Others Present

- Lisa Perez (USDA Forest Service)
- Tiffany Giacobazzi (City of Ann Arbor/ISA-MI)
- Brian Murphy (City of Buchanan)
- Nia Becker (Dovetail Partners)
- Stathis Pauls (MSU Extension)
- Megan Eppley (City of Big Rapids)
- Rachel Meeker (Friends of Rouge Park)

I. Call to Order: 10:00 A.M.

II. Approval of Agenda:

Amendments:

- Section VI, add Alliance for Community Trees membership renewal - Mueller
- Section VI, switch order of items A (Membership) and B (Goals) - Mueller

Motion to approve: Griffin

Support: Hickman

Vote: Approved unanimously

III. Approval of Minutes of March 21, 2024 meeting:

Motion to approve: Santoro

Support: Hickman

Vote: Approved unanimously

Approval of Minutes of July 23, 2024 meeting:

Motion to approve: Hickman

Support: Griffin
Vote: Approved unanimously

IV. DNR Program and Staffing Report

- Sayers provided advance copy of written UCF program report with following highlights:
 - Program staffing changes: New hire (Daphna Gadoth) introduced
 - Reviewed and discussed [UCF Program and Staffing Report](#)

Action item(s):

- *Per Hickman suggestion, Sayers will add information on urban wood utilization to new Tree Removal Assistance section of [UCF website](#).*

V. Committee Reports:

Grants (*K Gray - chair, Downtin, Schultz, Sayers*)

- Recapped status of UCF IRA grant funding:
 - 1st round – 8 awards totaling \$300,000 in December 2023. Projects in progress.
 - 2nd round – 19 awards totaling \$3.1M in October. Projects in progress
 - 3rd round – Applications anticipated by early 2025 for ~\$1M
- Recapped status of Community Forestry Grant (CFG)
 - 24 proposals received requesting \$393,000. \$125,000 available. Awards in December.
- Recapped DTE Tree Planting Grant (DTE)
 - Application period closes tomorrow (10/31). Total available funding: \$100,000

Forest Health (*Kruise - chair*)

- No report.
- After several meetings with no report, a motion was made to dissolve the committee.
Motion: Mueller Support: Hickman Approved unanimously

Advocacy (*Vacant - Chair, Griffin, Foen, Hickman, Sayers*)

- No report.
- After several meetings with no report, a motion was made to dissolve the committee.
Motion: Mueller Support: Hickman Approved unanimously

Data (*Santoro - chair, Downtin, Sayers, K. Gray, Klifman*)

- No report
- Santoro to assume role as chair for this committee.

Michigan Arbor Day Alliance (*Lancour - chair, Sayers, Kruise, Stay*)

- No report.
- After several meetings with no report, a motion was made to dissolve the committee.
Motion: Griffin Support: Mueller Approved unanimously

VI. Items for Discussion:

a. 2025 MUCFC Goals and Objectives (Mueller)

Continuation of initial discussion from summer meeting. Reviewed list of possible council goals and objectives and prioritized 3 for action during the next year:

1. Assist DNR in review and input for UCF specific items in the DNR's Forest Action Plan including possible presentation at upcoming ISA-Michigan ArborCon conference.
 2. Coordinate with and provide assistance to ISA-Michigan in planning for the 2025 Tour de Trees and 2026 ISA Trade Show and Conference being held in Michigan.
 3. Partner with ISA Michigan on developing conference presentation topics/speakers related to urban and community forestry for future events.
- Other items discussed include: SFI UCF standard implementation, Urban wood utilization initiatives, community engagement/assistance toolkit

Action item(s):

- *Mueller to email new MUCFC chair to discuss transition and awareness of 2025 goals.*

b. MUCFC Membership Update and Recruitment (Mueller/Sayers)

- Update on status of membership and including expiring, renewing and new members:
 - Current voting membership: 11
 - Kruse and Lancour resign positions, Downtin, Mueller, Foen, Griffin expired.
 - Mueller declines renewal
 - Downtin, Foen, and Griffin request renewal of 3yr terms expiring Fall 2027
 - Motion to approve renewing members: Schultz, Support: Santoro, Approved unanimously
 - Candidate members requesting approval to new 3yr membership terms expiring Fall 2027 (Candidate/Motion/Support/Action)
 - Giacobazzi - Motion: Hickman, Support: Schultz, Approved unanimously
 - Murphy - Motion: Hickman, Support: Downtin, Approved unanimously
 - Pauls - Motion: Downtin, Support: Griffin, Approved unanimously
 - Eppley - Motion: Schultz, Support: Griffin, Approved unanimously
 - Annual chair and vice chair election and related motions to approve/support/action:
 - Giacobazzi to Chair – Motion: Shultz, Support: Griffin, Approved unanimously
 - Griffin to Vice Chair – Motion: Shultz, Support: Smith, Approved unanimously

Action item(s):

- *Sayers, Giacobazzi and Griffin to meet and discuss future membership needs (e.g. fill gaps in desired stakeholder representation areas, **esp. Arborist and Utility**)*
- *Sayers, Giacobazzi and Griffin to discuss staggering member terms to achieve balance*

c. Michigan Forest Action Plan – 2025 revision (Stay)

- For the benefit of new members, Stay described the background and status of the state's 10 yr Forest Action Plan (FAP) effective 2020-2030.

- 5 yr update required to be submitted to USFS by January 2026
- Annual FAP stakeholder meeting is planned for spring 2025 (TBA). A reporting template is being developed and will be circulated later this winter.
- MUCFC is key stakeholder representing UCF interests and Chair will be invited to attend/report at the stakeholder session.
- Stay and Sayers offer to conduct engagement session at upcoming ISA-Michigan ArborCon conference to survey participants about remaining UCF priorities in FAP.

Action item(s):

- *Giacobazzi to coordinate with ISA-Michigan for DNR FAP presentation at ArborCon Conference*

d. Annual UCF Program Report & MUCFC Letter to State Forester (Sayers/Mueller)

- Sayers advised that UCF program staff are beginning to work on 2024 UCF program Annual Report with goal of publishing to website by February 2025. (e.g., [2023 report](#))
- Mueller short on time to coordinate with Sayers and Giacobazzi to draft 2024 MUCFC Letter to State Forester due to upcoming vacation in November and December. (e.g., [prior letters](#))

Action item(s):

- *Sayers to share draft of 2024 UCF program with council in early 2025*
- *Mueller, Sayers and Giacobazzi to discuss and try to draft 2024 letter to state forester by 12/31. Sayers and Giacobazzi will finalize draft for council review in early 2025*

e. Alliance for Community Trees Membership (Mueller)

- 1 yr free MUCFC membership to ACT expiring 12/31/24. 1 yr. renewal costs - \$125.
- Council briefly discussed benefits and agreed that it is worth renewing through DNR UCF program funding.
 - Motion to renew membership: Santoro Support: Griffin Approved unanimously

Action item(s):

- *Giacobazzi to notify Sayers when renewal notice received. Sayers will renew via DNR UCF funds.*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Staff Communications:

- Sobson
 - Tree City USA applications being accepted now through December 31. Contact him or Daphna for any Tree City USA related assistance/questions.
 - Continuing updates of community tree selection guide with MSU and MNLA

Member Communications:

- With time running short, members were advised to provide any communication/updates in writing (email) to Sayers for sharing and inclusion in final meeting minutes.

Next Meeting: Spring, Tuesday – March 25 (time/location tba)

Adjournment:

At 12:03 PM, Motion to adjourn: Griffin Support: Schultz Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted: Kevin Sayers