



Urban & Community Forestry Council



Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: April 19, 2023

Roll call

Present for the Council (council):

- Doug Schultz
- Kerry Gray
- Annie Kruse
- Tyler Klifman
- Heather Griffin
- Geoff Kempter
- Paul Hickman
- Lee Mueller
- Asia Downtin
- Alec Smith

Present for the DNR Staff (department)

- Kevin Sayers
- Lawrence Sobson
- Andrea Stay
- Sue Tangora

Present for the USFS Staff

- Lisa Perez

Others Present

- Gerry Santoro, Macomb County Planning
- [Silas Gray](#), City of Dearborn Forestry

Call to Order: 10:04 AM

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve: Kempter
Support: Hickman
Approved unanimously

Approval of Minutes of October 25, 2022 meeting:

Motion to approve: Kruse
Support: Gray
Approved unanimously

Committee Reports:

Grants (Gray - chair, Mueller, Downtin, Tarpey, Sayers)

- No recent committee activity to report
- Hickman and Stay added to committee
- With new Inflation Reduction Act funding coming to state (DNR, UCF), this committee should anticipate having a significant role in helping develop and deliver a new subgrant program tied to the funding.

Action item(s):

- *Gray to convene committee meeting, likely June*

Tree City USA Banquet (Vacant - chair, Sayers, Kruse, Mueller, Griffin)

- No recent committee activity to report
- Kruse recommends we maintain the committee, have meeting and start planning for in-person awards/conference/event for next spring.
- Stay shared link to possible model for Arbor Day conference in VT that could be adapted to include Tree City USA awards.
- Kempter clarified that the target audience can be broader than just Tree City USA communities and a great opportunity to bring in sponsors (e.g., utilities, private business).
- Griffin added to committee

Action item(s): *Sayers and Kruse to convene committee this spring/summer for initial discussion and planning of spring 2024 event.*

Forest Health – Oak Wilt Coalition (Kruse - chair)

- No recent committee activity to report
- Update on Oak Wilt Coalition (OWC) efforts
 - Added some new members including Bill Brown – Consumers Energy
 - Reconfirmed OWC purpose of gathering data, provide training and raise awareness by working with fellow members to develop and present unified messages and verify and share data (e.g. DNR Forest Health, [Oak Wilt Viewer](#))
 - Coordinating with MSU on some Oak Wilt research related to chestnuts
 - Pursuing funding for reprint and development of oak wilt outreach materials
 - Oak Wilt Awareness Month Proc. Is set for May. Please help promote.
 - [Oak Wilt Research Seminar](#) - May 23 in Okemos, MI

Action item(s): *Recruit additional members and share Oak Wilt Awareness graphic with group*

Advocacy (Kempter - chair, Griffin, Foen, Hickman, Sayers)

- No recent committee activity to report
- Kempter and Schultz pointed out the importance of leveraging the Advocacy Committee work in efforts related to IRA funding and grantee.
- Sayers indicated DNR's IRA proposal included plans for developing communications

and messaging regarding IRA and UCF. This fits well with work of the committee.

Action item(s): Kempster to convene meeting of committee

Data (Dowtin – chair, Sayers, Mueller, Gray, Klifman)

- No recent committee activity to report
- Hickman added to committee
- Sayers noted that the DNR's IRA proposal included plans to obtain contracted data services for 1) statewide urban forest canopy cover and 2) creation of a UCF program data management dashboard.

Action item(s): *Dowtin to convene committee meetings (2x) over summer*

Michigan Arbor Day Alliance (Lancour – chair, Sayers, Kruse, Stay)

- New committee. Kay Lancour to represent group and act as chair
- Sayers reviewed Michigan Arbor Day Alliance (MADA) program transition to DNR
- Sayers and Stay updated on various Arbor Day events and outreach for this year
- MADA and Tree City USA committees to collaborate on plans for spring event 2024

Action item(s): *Stay/Sayers and Lancour to convene committee meeting in May/June*

Items for Discussion:

Membership

- Expiring Terms at Fall meeting:
 - Chair and Vice Chair annual election
 - Schultz, Hickman, Mueller, Kempster, Gray
 - All are eligible for renewing of 3 year terms
- Nominations to consider for council:
 - Gerry Santoro and Stanley Gray, guest attendees, interested in joining committee

Action item(s):

- *Expiring members need to contact Sayers or Tarpey to indicate intent to renew or not*
- *Sayers to send membership/nomination/election reminder to committee during summer*

Forest Action Plan (FAP) Stakeholder meeting

- Stay provided update and shared results of FAP stakeholder efforts this spring
 - February stakeholder engagement at ArborCon conference in Lansing
 - Good engagement and input from key stakeholders for UCF
 - 55 respondents provided input relative to UCF priorities
 - March annual Forest Action Plan stakeholder meeting in Gaylord
 - Hybrid meeting (in-person/virtual) with approximately 60? attendees
 - Good engagement tools and issues used via technology
 - UCF stakeholder attendance and input was low/weak

Action item(s):

- *Stay and Sayers will plan to schedule these opportunities annually*
- *Stay and Sayers, with input from council, will expand UCF stakeholder contacts*

Tree City USA – 2022 Update

- Sobson gave report on current status of 2022 Tree City USA program for Michigan
- 1st time administering program. Significant tech challenges for Arbor Day Foundation this year have resulted in delays and denied applications. Lots of frustrations.
- 120 applications received. Only 82 have been approved including 6 growth awards to date! 38 are still awaiting Arbor Day Foundation to approve.
- 10 Tree Campus Higher Education applications received. 9 approved
- 0 Tree Line USA and 0 Tree Campus Healthcare Institutions
- Per capita spending is down from last year but likely a result of delays from Arbor Day.

Action item(s):

- *Sobson will provide final numbers after program closes later this spring*
- *Kempter suggests using advocacy committee to reach out to utilities (municipal esp.)*

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding

- Sayers provided updated on IRA funding from USFS
 - Quick recap of new \$1.5 billion federal funding from USFS
 - \$1B federal notice of funding opportunity announced from USFS. **Due June 1st**
 - State only proposals funded at \$250M nationally out of \$900M requested
 - Michigan allocation = \$7.5M (0 match required if benefitting underserved areas)
 - Preliminary MI UCF spend plan:
 - \$3.2M – 3 new staff. 1 administrative, 2 field-based
 - \$1.5M – Contracted services for program improvement
 - \$2.8M – Competitive subgrants
 - Cannot request additional state spending authority needed until funds are awarded to State.
 - Priority order: Hire staff, secure contracted services, provide subgrant program
 - Once awarded, state has 5yrs to use and close out all expenses. **NO EXTENSIONS**
 - Subgrants are likely to be awarded in 2 and 3 years only (possibly 4th)

Action item(s): *Sayers/Sobson will share further details with members as they become available*

Public Comment:

- None

Staff Communications:

- Sayers
 - Received FY23 UCF Financial Advice for MI from USFS - \$650K (+ \$145K)

- All states base funding increased by \$50K to minimum of \$300K
- New requirement of staffing 1 FTE of partnership coordination (Lawrence)
- Attended MI Healthy Climate Conference in Detroit last week
- Annual meeting of state and federal UCF next month in Annapolis, MD
- Belle Isle sawmill Phase II work beginning in May, cleanup this Saturday
- DTE grants will be announced for application in June. CFG grants in August
- Earth Day this Saturday and Arbor Week/Day next week.

Member Communications:

- Kruse
 - ISA MI promoting multiple upcoming events on education calendar
 - Working with MSU on Tree Work 101 short course (10 participants registered)
- Downtin
 - Samantha Galey is joining faculty as new Green Space and Public Health faculty beginning in August. (60 % Forestry, 40% Public Health appointment)
 - Tree Work 101 enrollment has gone well 10 attendees from cities. Will provide a report in fall. This program is supported through 2024 with \$50K Project GREEN funds and it may become a traveling program (varied location) in the future.
- Hickman
 - Urban Wood Network is now a 501c3. This increase visibility and capacity to manage grants and communications on a national level.

Next Meeting: Summer: TBA; Regular Schedule: Tuesday, October 31st

Adjournment: 12:04 PM

Respectfully submitted: Kevin Sayers