



# Urban & Community Forestry Council



## Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: October 25, 2022

### Roll call

#### Present for the Council (council):

- Rachel Tarpey, *Chair*
- Doug Schultz
- Kerry Gray
- Annie Kruse
- Fai Foen
- Heather Griffin
- Geoff Kempter
- Paul Hickman
- Lee Mueller
- Asia Downtin

#### Present for the DNR Staff (department)

- Kevin Sayers, UCF Program Manager
- Lawrence Sobson, UCF Forester and Partnership Coordinator
- Andrea Stay, Forest Resources Division, Volunteer and Engagement Specialist

#### Present for the USFS Staff

- Lisa Perez, Urban Connections Program Manager

#### Others Present

- Alec Smith, Oakland Conservation District

Call to Order: 10:04 AM

#### Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve: Schultz

Support: Mueller

Approved unanimously

#### Approval of Minutes of July 21, 2022 meeting:

Motion to approve: Gray

Support: Downtin

Approved unanimously

#### Committee Reports:

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

- Provided update on Community Forestry Grant application trends
  - 41 proposals (requesting \$481K) this year, up from 17 proposals

- Significant spike in tree planting grant proposals this year
  - Are these all making connection to a formal plan as required by grant guidelines?
- Anticipate awarding at least \$150K in November for FY23 projects.

Action item(s):

- *Sayers to share FY23 grant award data with subcommittee when reviews complete*
- *Gray to convene committee as needed*

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

- No report
- Mueller resigns as chair with offer to continue as subcommittee member.

Action item(s): *Sayers and Kruse to discuss role/need for ad hoc committee or dissolve it*

**Forest Health – Oak Wilt Coalition** (Kruse - chair)

- No report

Action item(s): *Recruit additional members or dissolve committee*

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

- How can cities like Flint address and improve communication issues with residents
  - Knowing the stakeholder needs for various materials and info. is important
  - MUCFC collectively can help with member needs on communication. Likewise, MUCFC should also be ready to help state UCF program in vetting messaging and outreach
  - Resources are available and need to avoid recreating the wheel
  - Example of resources to assist in marketing materials (e.g. [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com))

Action item(s): Kempter/Griffin to hold subcommittee meeting

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

- No update

Action item(s): *Dowtin to convene subcommittee as needed.*

**Items for Discussion:**

**Membership**

- Nominations/Reappointment of Chair/Vice Chair positions
  - No new nominations
  - Both Chair and Vice-chair (Tarpey/Griffin) offer to renew positions
    - Motion to approve: Griffin (for Tarpey) and Tarpey (for Griffin)
    - Support: Mueller (for Tarpey) and Gray (for Griffin)
    - Approved unanimously
- Expiring Terms at Fall meeting:

- Kruse, Klifman both offer to renew for new 3 yr. term (exp. Fall 2025)
  - Motion to approve: Mueller
  - Support: Schultz
- Nominations to fill vacancies:
  - Alec Smith with Oakland Conservation District to 3 yr term (exp. Fall 2025)
    - Motion to approve: Sobson
    - Support: Gray
    - Approved unanimously

Action item(s):

- *Members – Recruit new candidates to fill vacant positions on council*

### **Policies and Procedures review and comment**

- Goal is to review document for relevance, take comment/questions, discuss and revise
- Comments/Questions:
  - Motion to approve edits as offered by Sayers: Griffin
  - Support: Gray
  - Approved unanimously

Action item(s): *Sayers will update and share with MUCFC for final with members and post online*

### **Forest Action Plan (FAP) Stakeholder meeting**

- Annual stakeholder meeting (objective 1.1.1) will be held in early 2023.
- Goal - discuss program and partner work/accomplishments towards FAP goals and identify and make minor edits as needed
- Date/time details to be determined but anticipate event to be held virtually in Jan-Feb
- Mix of sharing stories and active discussion using virtual breakout rooms
  - Suggestion to provide advance engagement with stakeholders to gain buy-in
  - Suggestion to include M-Parks and MI Downtown Association as stakeholders
- Avoid scheduling conflicts with other events (e.g., ISA Michigan ArborCon) to ensure key stakeholder participation
  - Late February would be good target.
  - Consider hosting advance in-person listening session in conjunction with ArborCon
- MUCFC Chair and/or vice-chair should plan to attend as stakeholder
- UCF Coordinator and staff will attend and report on program progress

Action item(s):

- *Sayers/Stay will communicate with Kruse regarding possible in-person listening session at ArborCon conference.*
- *Sayers/Stay to communicate meeting date and details with council members*
- *Members to provide any relevant details of work/accomplishments to Tarpey to report*

### **Annual Letter to State Forester**

- Members should have reviewed 2021 letter.
- Goal – Formal communication to State Forester as means of regular engagement, dialogue

and information sharing (e.g., issues, priorities, highlights, support etc.)

- Timeline – Take input for draft letter by end of November. Finalize by end of December. Send to State Forester in January.
- Ways to follow up and ensure this is being received and valued by State Forester:
  - Schedule meeting between State Forester and Chair and/or UCF program staff
  - Coordinate and host virtual/in-person “Coffee with the State Forester”
    - Consider doing as part of Forest Action Plan listening session at ArborCon

Action item(s):

- *Members provide issues, priorities, comments to Tarpey/Sayers by end of November*
- *Sayers to provide program accomplishment metrics to Tarpey by end of November*
- *Tarpey to send final letter to State Forester by January*
- *Tarpey/Sayers to discuss possible in-person meeting with State Forester*
- *Sayers, Stay, Sobson and Kruse to discuss possible Coffee with State Forester event*

### **Michigan Arbor Day Alliance Transition (MADA)**

- Update from previous discussion about transition of MADA from Eaton Conservation District (ECD) to DNR
  - Physical and electronic assets transferred to DNR
  - Grant closed
  - Sue Spagnuolo retired from ECD
  - DNR staff working to integrate information into existing communication networks and media resources (e.g., phone, email, social and web media and contact lists)
  - New opportunities to engage MADA constituents on related programs (e.g., Project Learning Tree and Adopt A Forest etc.)
- Nov. 3 luncheon with MADA committee
- Dec. 6 – MADA future visioning meeting (virtual)
- AmeriCorps staffing will help support program from January-November 2023
- MADA member(s) interested in joining MUCFC as member and incorporating MADA coalition as a new Arbor Day subcommittee.
  - Members approve of this concept and advise formalizing it at March meeting

Action item(s):

- *Sayers will keep council updated on status of MADA transition to DNR*
- *Sayers and Stay will discuss MADA transition to MUCFC with coalition members*

### **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding**

- \$1.5 B in new federal funding for UCF programs nationally over next 10yrs.
- Details of funding distribution are unclear at this point but expect more clarity will be provided by USFS at upcoming Partner’s in Community Forestry conference next month
- Anticipate multiple rounds of federally administered grant funding beginning after new year
  - Multi-year and larger budget proposals to be accepted

- Possible focus on states in first round to support capacity needs
- Additional rounds of funding may target eligible partners and activities more broadly.
- If federal grants are funding similar work to state UCF grant program, we will need to make a decision about how to use state funds
- Once details are clear, state will pivot program to address needs of constituents relative to allowance of new funding and regular core program funding and assistance.
  - Surveys can be effective tool in assessing needs from stakeholders
  - Don't forget, Diversity, equity, inclusion and underserved areas can exist in all communities regardless of size or location.
  - Support for data collection needs (e.g., GIS) will ultimately be important to showcasing impacts and results.

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

### Public Comment:

- None

### Staff Communications:

- Sayers
  - Finalized new 5 yr. agreement between DNR and MSU for UCF support
  - Helped secure USFS grant (\$485K) w/ AF for Detroit Tree Equity Partnership
    - Participated in kickoff event 2 weeks ago in Detroit with partners
- Sobson
  - Very busy with grant reviews
  - Planting trees with Greening of Detroit
  - Gearing up to start reviewing Tree City USA applications

### Member Communications:

- Kruse
  - ISA MI celebrated fifth year of Oak Wilt Qualification course
    - 32 attendees for training this year.
  - Planning 2023 ArborCon conference (Feb 13-15 in Lansing).
    - Taking presenter proposals currently
- Schultz
  - Genesee Drain Commission enforcing roadway stormwater management studies
    - Challenge and Opportunity
    - Looking for resources and information to help in understanding and designing systems where trees can be integrated and provide benefits
    - Please contact him to share thoughts and resources.
- Hickman
  - Urban Ashes received grant for cut-model project.

- Grand Rapids doing tree log give away for opening new sorting yard.

Next Meeting: Tuesday March 28, 2022 (location and time TBA)

Adjournment: 12:00 PM

Motion: G Kempter

Support: H Griffin

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted: Kevin Sayers