

Tree and Landscape Advisory Committee and Bentonville Parks Conservancy Joint Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 2022

12:00 pm

Downtown Activity Center - 215 SW A Street

AGENDA

OPEN MEETING - Meeting is being recorded.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Introductions/Welcome**
- 2. Tree & Landscape Committee Background (Nathan Lembke and Jessie Wagner)**
- 3. Bentonville Parks Conservancy Background (Mary Beth Miller)**
- 4. Discussion on how to leverage both groups**

ADJOURN MEETING

** Attachment*



MEMO

To: City Council & Mayor Stephanie Orman
From: Bentonville Municipal Tree Preservation Committee
Date: February 10th, 2022
RE: Key takeaways of the Bentonville Municipal Tree Preservation Committee

The Municipal Tree Preservation Committee has been hard at work to find the most appropriate and effective methods to preserve our tree canopy in Bentonville. The committee was able to bring together a working group which includes both public organizations and private stakeholders from our community. The committee conducted a current policy evaluation to find strengths and weaknesses in current preservation policy focusing on Article 1300, Tree Protection and Planting and Section 1400.11 Tree Preservation Credits. It was found that:

- Consistent enforcement is critical from current planning staff and code enforcement, and may be more impactful than implementing a new ordinance or committee to spur preservation.
- Current Bentonville City Code requires that tree counts are waived in exchange for protection of existing trees, and prioritizes planting street trees, residential trees, and screening landscaping.
- Existing code shows strength in requiring new tree plantings for large scale developments, and allotting funding for tree blitzes, giveaways, etc.

The committee worked through two meetings to develop seven unique concepts. Ordered by preference/feasibility.

1. Improving Incentive programs for construction, such as preservation credits, like we currently allow via Article 1400.11 expanding the existing ordinance to include provisions for parking reductions or other tangible incentives and increase the total allowable credits
2. Extra Credit” for tree plantings above the minimum requirements that rewards excess plantings through density, height, or other bonuses for developers. allows for off-site plantings where utility conflicts exist (tree banks)
3. Educational programming such as Provide technical assistance to home builders, developers, and private citizens on proper tree planting and maintenance techniques
4. Improving compulsory policy such as maintenance requirements for public and private trees, and enforcement agreements to ensure tree preservation during/after large scale development.
5. Voluntary programs such as heritage tree designation programs codifying protections for the oldest trees in our city.
6. Minimum Canopy Preservation Percentages, Requiring calculation and enforcement of pre- and post-development tree canopy coverage percentages, similar to City of Fayetteville.
7. Allow for off-site plantings where utility conflicts exist (tree banks) and designate prioritized, public, planting areas on public lands, such as the right-of-way or publically owned lands.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Many of the tasks identified do not require significant cost nor ordinance changes
- Improving existing policies, processes, and workflows, in addition to robust educational programming could yield high dividends
- Recommendation: Implement the items that seem the most feasible, and assess the results of a more comprehensive, organized preservation and planting program.