

Illinois FDC - Urban and Community Forestry Committee

Meeting Minutes for November 2, 2017

Attendees: Robert Sproule, Sravya Pamulapati, Reinee Hildebrandt, Debbie Fluegel, Lydia Scott, Jessie Felix, Beth Corrigan, Daniella Pereira, Sandy Mason.

Meeting was called to order by Rob Sproule, Chairperson

Old Business:

Rob reminded people that the documents for today's meeting (including agenda, the meeting minutes and topics that we were going to address today) are available on the IDNR UCF website under Partnership Resources.

Minutes: The meeting minutes were discussed. Beth moved and Jessie seconded the motion to approve. Motion carried.

Update from the last CFD meeting. Rob was appointed co-chair to the Forestry Summit Committee. Reinee and Lydia mentioned that most of the discussion was focused on the summit.

Rob mentioned that Sravya will be will be graduating and ending employment mid-December. Sravya reported on upgrade the UCFC webpage and encouraged people to send in their bio and photos using the prototype that was posted on the website. Sravya also reported on the Trees of Impact page for the IDNR UCF webpage. The purpose is to represent people with ties to Urban and Community Forestry and to tell the story of urban and community forestry through their stories. Reinee Mentioned that the submittal form was posted in the TCU Newsbits and forms were handed out at the IAA Conference. Since she will be leaving December 15th she needs everything by end of November so she can put it together before she leaves. Once she leaves what she produces will be a finished product.

Reinee agreed to post items to the website until the new Secretary is found.

Sravya was thanked for her work with the Council.

STATE of the STATE REPORT: Reinee Hildebrandt reported on the State Budget. Per permission given from Tom Wilson during her conversation with him (two days prior) to share the issues with the Urban and Community Forestry Committee. a conversation. Tom reported to Reinee that the Division only has \$540,00 worth of funding left in the Division's allocation which is two months of the Divisions (\$270,000 monthly for only salary expenses). Our Division needs \$3.2 million for salaries and benefits only (not including program expenses).

At one point the Division's salaries were paid from another fund outside of the Division. and the Divisions only paid for program expenditures. Then there was a shift to having the Division pay for the salaries then both salaries and benefits were taken from the Division's allocation.

The 905 account is ahead of the by \$200,000 yet we are projected to only bring in \$1.5 million this fiscal year. That is just under half of what was needed for salaries. The other piece of the puzzle is that the Division has just hired three new District Foresters which would be unfair to them if we are going to close down the Division in December.

Per Document on the webpage, PAGES 280 to 287 from the State of Illinois Budget Allocation report. Page 280, We fit into that first part of the document "Protecting the Resource" and the second area is "Oversees Wildlife and Fisheries for Recreation and State Park System"

Talking Points:

- 1) Urban and Community Forestry helps provide habitat for migratory birds. (per Sass, et.al.)
- 2) Urban and Community Forestry helps provide clean water by slowing down the stormwater and protecting against soil erosion.
- 3) Urban and Community Forestry provides recreation for 90% of Illinois citizens on a daily bases due to sidewalk and backyard recreation even though we are not included in the OSLAD annual state report.

See PAGE 280 "FY17 Resource Summary by Category FUNDS" (General Funds). They are saying an additional \$42 million in funds are needed. On the next page, see "Resources by Funding General Revenue", in SFY 16 they zeroed out the fund; in SFY17, they gave some money back. In SFY18 they gave the \$42 million back. So, we should be ok but we are being told that we only have \$540,00 left in the account. Additionally, the agency head count SFY 16 to 17 loss of one head count and then a loss of 60 head count this year which might be attrition.

See Resources by Results Outcomes by Programs, Forest Management. It shows that the budget appropriations which has gone up \$1million per year and the headcount has gone down and then is up this year.

On Page 282 to Forest Management and see the performance measure by program. There is nothing there for Urban and Community Forestry even though we have metrics from the Partnership reports, Tree City USA and CARS data. We should be reporting percent of population under urban forest management plus others as suggested by the Committee.

On Page 283 Expenses of the Forestry Development Council – SFY 16 to SFY 18 \$118,500 was appropriated for Forestry Development Council expenditures. Yet in SFY16 only \$22,000 was spent and in SFY17 only \$75,000 was spent. This puts the FDC at risk of not being funded at the same level in the future.

On Page 284, "Expenses of the Urban and Community Forestry Program" which is being used for the Forestry Division expenses verses the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The Forestry Division is using those funds to pay for staffing and program for the entire Division. In SFY \$5.4 million with actual expenditures of \$4.3 million. In SFY 17, the appropriation was \$5.9 million and \$5.1 million was spent. So, the Forestry Division is using the Urban and Community Forestry Line Item and expending from \$4.3

to 5.1 annually. The Governor proposed a SFY18 appropriation of \$5.6 million for the Urban and Community Forestry Line Item.

Timber Buyers Fund Forfeitures which is designated for the Wood Products Program business.

Page 285 is General Revenue. Historically that is where we got our funds. About 10 to 15 years ago we were told to get off the General Revenue funds because they were going away. The Forestry Division leadership at that time chose not to believe it and did nothing. That is why we are in the situation that we are in today. So, in SFY 16 the allocation was zeroed out. The actual expenditure was \$40 million. This year the Governor proposed the \$43 million.

Page 286 is the 905-funding appropriation requiring General Assembly Action. The last page is 287 and you can see the amount of headcount by Resource Conservation (where Forestry is located) has a loss of 9 people which could be attrition.

Budget documentation shows a sustained program yet Tom Wilson is being told that we are nearly out of funds. (NOTE: BY the next FDC meeting this issue had been resolved.)

Reinee Hildebrandt (At Tom Wilson's agreement) provided Tom's phone for the Committee to be able to ask him questions.

The Committee discussed the information.

Points:

- 1) Per Daniella Pereira's question, the internal budget determination process was discussed.
- 2) Per Daniella Pereira's question, the 905 timber tax uses were discussed and Paul Deizman's comment that the language had changed to "may use the fund" vs. "Shall use the fund" and the importance of getting back to spending the money for landowner reforestation cost-share efforts but that no law is being broken to use it for staff and programs.
- 3) Per Rob Sproule's question, why is the 905 being used if the Division is getting appropriated through General Revenue funds. Reinee Hildebrandt indicated that that was also her question and reiterated her confusion on why that occurs and why also urban and community forestry has such a big allocation and she is only allowed to use the money only for her salary. There are always the comments of having no allocation but an appropriation or you have an allocation but no appropriation.
- 4) Per Daniella Pereira's question about the federal funds, Reinee reiterated that she is not given the opportunity to spend the funding only for her salary and Sravya's. (because it is an intergovernmental agreement) but currently we cannot do outside contracts. Reinee Hildebrandt reported that since FFY 15 the federal funding is being re-directed to outside partners at Jill Johnson's request and Tom Wilson's approval. IDNR UCF program has federal funds from FFY13 to FFY 15 with about a million dollars that need to be spent. IDNR tried to re-direct it to other Urban Forestry efforts but was told that the money if not spent would go back to the USDA FS in general and not specifically to Urban and Community Forestry initiatives.

- 5) Summary, Tom only has money to spend until December for Division salaries. Paul Deizman thought that there were other funds in ORC to pay for resource services such as the Stewardship Program and field Foresters.
- 6) The dismantling of other state Forestry Divisions (Iowa, New Jersey) was discussed.
- 7) The role of the Council in discussions with Legislators was Part E/F of the authorizing law was mentioned with referral to Tom Wilson or Bill Gradle.
- 8) A small group was going to set up a meeting with an elected official. With Tom Wilson providing information on the programs only.
- 9) Rob was asked to ask Bill Gradle to have Chris Whittom to report out what he found about the use/expenditures of the Urban and Community Forestry line item.

Illinois Statewide FORESTRY SUMMIT – A committee was established and approved funding contingent on the committee creating a budget. Referral to the handout.

Date: June 12-13th.

Location: U of I I- Hotel

Mission: Invite Traditional and Urban Partners and release the State Action Plan and to engage partners in the goals and threats in the action plan.

Agenda: reception, meal with exposure of the plan; Next day: Small groups to get commitment for aspects of the plan.

List of people to invite was put together by Beth Corrigan. The goal is to get people engaged in helping to make these changes. Rob encouraged comments from committee members. Beth Corrigan and Lydia Scott are on the committee. Reinee Hildebrandt suggested adding the American Public Works Association and a Tree City USA representative through the Illinois Municipal League.

UCFC BY-LAWS and MOU: The By-Laws were discussed and approved for posting on the IDNR website. The Committee discussed adding the language that this group also serves as the official USDA Forest Service Council per the state's requirement to have a council to get state funding. Approved by the Council. It was suggested that the IDNR UCF and USDA FS UCF be added as ex-officio without making them fill out an MOA. All other state and federal agencies will have to go through an approval process to serve in an ex-officio capacity. Approved by the Council to be taken in front on the Forestry Development Council at the next meeting.

The Members Agreement was reviewed and approved to be taken in front on the Forestry Development Council at the next meeting.

If approved at the Council Meeting then they will be sent to members and to Sravya Pamulipati for posting on the IDNR UCF website.

New Business: -None

Members Reports

Morton Arboretum – Beth Corrigan will be attending the Partners Conference next week.

Chicago Regional Trees Initiative – Lydia Scott mentioned that CRTI is completing Recommendations for Master Plan Strategies for the Region and will be presented to the Executive Advisory Council in December; including Canopy Recommendations, Oak Ecosystem Function and Invasive buckthorn reduction; Next meeting December 7th and will include a talk about Diversity.

Trees Forever - Debbie Fluegel reported REVOCER REPLANT RESTORE in 15 communities. They are in the middle of tree planting. They are working with a lot of small communities with training, tree inventories and tree planting. They are looking for five or six additional communities. They have a tree planting scheduled in Ottawa, IL as a part of the Tornado Re-Leaf program this weekend in the tornado impacted area.

Park Districts – Jesse Felix – no report

U of I Extension - Sandy Mason mentioned the tree list and thanked people for providing input and thanked Reinee for directing her to the USDA Forest Service grant. The list is to be used in their training modules for the grant. There will be a registered tree walk in each county in Illinois. The Extension group will be meeting with Trisha from the Morton Arboretum on tree aps for forest health.

IDNR - Reinee Hildebrandt has been working on the CARS Report, going to the Partners Conference in November in Tulsa, OK; and sponsored through Trees Forever the IAA Conference this year. This year we were able to get the community of Lombard the scholarship which is the real intent of the conference to get communities to the Conference. As previously reported, Sravya Pamulapati, GPSI, will be graduating and ending employment mid-December. Sravya Pamulapati reported that before leaving she will upgrade the UCFC webpage and create a Trees of Impact page for the IDNR UCF webpage.

Mini report on the Forest Action Plan – they are doing final fine tuning of the report and it should be out soon.

Openlands - Daniella Pereira reported that Openlands is winding down and completing their last tree planting this next weekend. They have had a really tremendous planting season this year. They are hosting the first inaugural TREE KEEPER Gathering by brining all the graduate TreeKeepers from the region together to celebrate all graduates from the three courses. Lydia Scott will provide the State of the State report at the event. They are honoring the Morton Arboretum with Mr. Donnelly receiving the award.

Next Meeting January 4th 10:00 AM

Beth moved to adjourn and Jessie seconded the motion to approve. Motion carried.

Meeting was Adjourned.