



Quincy Tree Commission

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Quincy Tree Commission

Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025

730 Maine, City Hall, council chambers, Quincy, Illinois 62301

MINUTES

Attendance

Members Present: Jan Leimbach (chair), Corrine Duryea (vice chair), Rome Frericks, Ed Holthaus, Jamie Russell, Candy Scott, John Scott, Beth Young, Jack Wilson

Members Absent: Bob Terstriep

City Staff Present: Linda Moore, Jeffrey Conte, Jason Parrott, David Adam

Leimbach calls the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Frericks makes a motion to approve the minutes. Holthaus seconds. Motion unanimously carries.

Moore thanks the commission for their work and emphasizes the importance of trees in the community. She asks the commission to address dead and overgrown trees that are causing damage to water lines, sewers and sidewalks. She asks for the decisions the commission makes today to be sustainable for future generations. Leimbach says the width of the tree yard, as well as guidelines for tree size and placement, will be considered by the commission. Wilson asks which areas are problematic in Quincy. Moore says approximately 4500 trees either need to be trimmed or removed. Holthaus asks about trimming sidewalk areas. Moore confirms it will be addressed, especially with the school year starting.

Leimbach asks about the commission's presentation to the City Council. Parrott says he will coordinate the schedule once the presentation is ready. Russell asks if the presentation needs to be reviewed first by the city, and Parrott says no. C. Scott mentions the importance of having pictures for the presentation.

Parrott says he recently spoke with a manager at Raising Cane's, and they are working on the logistics of the commission's community beautification award. He hopes to schedule the presentation for late August or early September.

Leimbach introduces the topic of the fall tree planting program and the need to discuss options. She notes the cost of the trees was increased from \$50 to \$100 last year. Russell says she researched tree programs in Skokie, Lockport, Batavia, DeKalb, Geneva and Flossmoor. The application programs are done online. Some cities only ask the homeowner to water the tree for two years, but other cities have a 50/50 cost-share program. She suggests lowering the price per tree to get more trees planted. Parrott said the city budgeted \$17,000 for the program and bought 36 trees last year, but only 27 were sold. Prices ranged from \$215 to \$285 per tree, and the cost to plant each tree was \$230.

Parrott said some people asked for specific trees, and when they learned the city wasn't offering them, they walked out. The varieties of trees have remained the same for the past few years. However, most people who came to Planning and Development ended up buying a tree, but people weren't coming in.

Parrott said he didn't know if it was because of a lack of interest or because of the cost. Holthaus recommends offering maple trees this year. He shows the committee a list of trees, with accompanying diameters and heights, from Frese Nursery that were recommended as street trees. Some of the trees on the list, noted by asterisks, need to be dug in the spring but could be planted in the fall.

Parrott explains the process of bidding for tree purchases and planting services, and the potential for city crews to plant trees. He also offers the possibility of city employees planting the trees. Leimbach says the accepted standard for an area to plant a tree is typically five feet wide. Parrott says most rights-of-way in Quincy are between three and five feet wide. Leimbach asks if homeowners need to be made aware of the width requirement. Parrott says that has been tried in previous years. He said root barriers have been used in previous years because of concerns with sidewalks and trees.

Leimbach said she went to a shade tree conference at Iowa State University, and experts there told her not to use root barriers. She said the parks and rec department in Kansas City won't plant any tree in a space less than five feet and will only plant trees that only get as big as a 24-inch diameter. If the space is 6-8 feet wide, the trees can have a 42-inch diameter. Parrott said tree bids typically go out in September, and planting happens in November. Wilson mentions training city crews to ensure proper planting and maintenance. Parrott says the only warranty with the trees is that they will bud out in the first spring. He also said Amy Lefringhouse with the University of Illinois Extension has offered to help with training.

Parrott and Leimbach discuss whether the public should still come in to buy trees or if the city should designate places where trees are needed. Leimbach questions if someone gets a tree placed in front of their home if they will maintain it. Parrott says trees have been planted all over the city. Holthaus says he hasn't liked the variety of trees offered recently. Wilson says the trees that cause problems are the giant sycamores. Conte says he can walk down a street and find 100 pin oaks that are in rights-of-way that are four feet wide or less, and the sidewalks are unaffected. Holthaus says putting trees in 5-by-5 squares on Maine Street are a death sentence, because it's like putting them in a coffin.

Parrott suggests putting together two bids, one for buying trees and the city planting them and one for buying trees and local tree companies planting them. Separating the bids might lead to bids from other companies, Parrott said. Leimbach said the Master Naturalists are holding a tree sale in the fall, and the trees are coming from Boehm's Garden Center in Rushville. Holthaus says a purchase-only bid allows for a larger variety of trees to be available. Leimbach says the recent tree inventory shows the city has plenty of locusts and red maples. Wilson notes several of the trees on last year's list are "cultivators" and doesn't think they're typically native to this area.

Parrott proposes a two-week period for commission members to research and submit their top three tree shade tree and ornamental tree varieties. The commission agrees to reconvene in two weeks to finalize the list of trees for the bid and discuss other program details. For tree options, Leimbach refers to a list of trees from multiple cities that show small, medium and large trees, plus a list of "undesirable" trees. Holthaus suggests not limiting the commission to what other cities are doing.

With no public comment and no further discussion, a motion to adjourn was made by Holthaus. Frericks seconds. Motion carries, and the meeting adjourns at 2:02 p.m.

David Adam, Commission Secretary
Community Planner and Developer, City of Quincy