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Quarterly Meeting

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Agency: [City of Cleveland Urban Forestry Commission](#)

Date: Jan. 14, 2025

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Summary

- There is a plan in place to ensure the tree canopy in Cleveland is well maintained.
- The commission addressed the need to educate the public on the importance of [maintaining trees](#).

Follow-Up Questions

- How do you determine who gets a tree on their tree lawn?
- Who manages the care of the trees?

Notes

The meeting began at 4 p.m. and ended at 5:30 p.m.

Commission members present:

- Xavier Bay (City Planning, Cleveland)
- Jose Hernandez (Public Utilities, Cleveland)
- Jennifer Kipp (Urban Forestry, City of Cleveland)
- Dan Leamon (resident, health specialist)
- Samira Malone, chair (Center for Regenerative Solutions)
- Anna Zaremba (Sustainability, City of Cleveland)
- Jenny Spencer (Ward 15 City Council Member)
- Tom Schreiber (Western Reserve Land Conservancy)
- Jinan Berard (youth member, student at Hathaway Brown)

The meeting began with Malone saying the role of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) includes assisting in the adoption of urban forest management planning and providing recommendations on policy and plans, along with several other duties.

The commission then approved past meeting minutes with edits and then discussed unfinished business as noted on the [agenda](#).

Unfinished business

- a. UFC's role supporting rewrite of [Chapter 509 of the city charter](#), which deals with trees. Vice Chair Kipp: Made research request to look at peer cities. Will do a comparison of tree penalties/fines. Will direct findings to Cleveland Parks and Recreation Director Alex Nichols for approval.
- b. Draft policy for trees and sidewalks review. Kipp: Currently, the city's options to "avoid damaging the supporting and anchoring roots of trees on tree lawns" are to reduce sidewalk width, though the city currently does not reduce it below 48". And if reducing is not possible, the city could request easement from residents to place sidewalks in their yards. This new policy would let the city further reduce the sidewalk width in some cases to 36". The commission's Policy Committee is still working on the draft. Spencer said 3-foot sidewalks should be the last resort and the easement process should be robust.
- c. Revisions to rules and regulations. Secretary Zaremba: Mayor's Office of Sustainability will provide notices 10 days prior to meeting occurrences. Will include time and agenda, virtual link and meeting place. Meetings can't take place unless these things are in place. Establish a calendar for the year. Spencer: There needs to be more flexibility regarding setting a cadence for the calendar year. She was not willing to set dates for meetings for a year. Should stay with the 10-day notification. The commission decided to table the discussion about the cadence.
[Editor's note: The commission is implementing the new notice policy, with notices of committee meetings set to be posted publicly at minimum 7 days in advance of the meeting.]

New business

- a. Youth appointee recommendation - Chair Malone

The [youth appointee](#) is Jinan Berard, a junior at Hathaway Brown. She introduced herself to the commission.

- b. Commission member search. Malone: There are 23 applications for the commission's vacant positions. The application deadline is Jan. 17.
- c. Committee update -
 - i. Leamon, Maintenance Committee: There is a need for maintenance education in the city. Need to apply best practices. Kipp: City partners are

set to plant 800 trees in Cleveland in 2025. Committee charter recommends care for trees at all stages of life cycle and engaging community members.

- ii. Spencer, Budget Committee: Said she met with the new director of Parks and Recreation. Discussed funding stream for the city's Division of Urban Forestry. Remains to be seen what the division gets in the Mayor's Estimate of the 2025 city budget.

- d. Urban Forestry Commission Annual Report. Zaremba: The annual report is due early to mid-February.
- e. Urban Forestry Division - Kipp: Entering into new tree contracts, including one for pruning. Have a cloud-based management system for real-time updates from vendors on tree work. Established regular meetings with Nichols.
- f. U.S. Forest Service grant update - Kipp: Received a \$3.4 million grant. Three divisional foresters completed Tree Risk Assessment Training. Tree work begins summer of 2025. Opportunity Corridor is a focus as part of "transformational maintenance." The tree maintenance is included under the grant.
- g. Cleveland Climate Action Plan - Zaremba: Goals:
 - i. Enhance nature-based infrastructure to create more resilient watershed
 - ii. All residents live within 10-minute walk of green space
 - iii. Reuse and repurpose organic materials

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