

**APRIL 7, 2026 7:30 A.M.**  
**THE BOB CRANE COMMUNITY CENTER**  
**3200 TREMONT RD**

The City Tree Commission met at the boardroom of the Bob Crane Community Center and was called to order at 7:33 am by Chair J.P. Ratajczak

**1. Welcome: Call to order** and roll call - Chair J.P. Ratajczak / Veronica Trommer

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<u> X </u> Chair J.P. Ratajczak	<u> X </u> Vice-Chair Laura Fay
<u> X </u> Kathy Duke	<u>   </u> Vacant
<u> X </u> Scott Zanon	<u> X </u> Kim Landsbergen
<u> X </u> Blythe Price	

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Parks & Recreation Director Debbie McLaughlin, Parks & Forestry Superintendent Samantha Simmons, Forestry Supervisor Matt Stewart, and Administrative Assistant Veronica Trommer

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of the Tree Commission meeting for February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Motioned:** J.P.

**First:** Laura

**Second:** Scott

Motion passed

**3. Public participation**

No public participation

#### 4. Discussion items

a.) Education / Outreach

i.) Sustainability Fair-

- This weekend (April 11<sup>th</sup>) from 10 am – 1 pm
- Kim, Karla, Laura, Kathy, Blythe, JP and Sam plan on attending
- The Commission will have a table with informational materials including fact sheets for tree canopy assessment, Ohio tree and shrub identification guides, and spring ephemeral guides
- The library plans to provide at least one laptop for interactive demonstrations letting residents explore Upper Arlington's tree canopy and related mapping data
- There will be children's books and educational giveaways

b.) Arbor Day-

- The Tree Planting ceremony will be at Sunny 95 Park, near the walking path and will take place on April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. The date was adjusted to accommodate Greensview third grader's state testing schedules
- Planned activities include a brief educational presentation on trees and the history of Arbor Day, recognition of America's 250th anniversary, and the planting of three swamp white oak trees
- Scott will be providing his books for all third-grade students again this year

c.) Tree Trek Signage –

- Sam indicated that the signs would likely be 5" x 7" and mounted on square posts around 18" above the ground and made with weather-resistant etched metal printing
- The QR code would be by tree trek location rather than individual tree
- The use of scientific and common names without permanent cultivar labeling for easier replacements if necessary

d.) Board and Commission Applications

- Sam reminded members that applications for boards and commissions were due at the end of the month

- All members whose terms expire must reapply
  - Appointments are typically finalized at the last City Council meeting before summer recess
  - Members confirmed receiving application acknowledgment emails from the City Clerk's office
- e) Spring Fling Event
- The event is organized by the Parks & Recreation Department
  - The Parks & Forestry Division responsibilities include setting up, putting up tents, collecting trash and helping with the fishing derby
  - The event will also include a rededication of the barn and discussion about the new grove of 17 trees at Sunny 95 for America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- f.) Westover Oak & Witness Tree Research
- Discussion continued regarding the historic Westover Oak and whether it may qualify as a "witness tree"
  - Kim obtained access to GIS shapefiles and historical survey datasets through Ohio State resources and academic contacts
  - Members also discussed collecting and propagating acorns from the Westover Oak to preserve its legacy through future plantings
- g.) Farmer's Market
- Discussed opportunities to participate in the Upper Arlington Farmers Market.
  - Because space is limited, the Commission expects to receive only one assigned date if selected.
  - Members also discussed future educational programming ideas, such as leaf printing activities, wood cookie ornament painting, tree planting workshops and family-oriented craft activities paired with educational content.

## 5. Updates from staff

- a.) General/Operational Forestry Updates-

- Sam, Matt and the city arborists all attended prescription pruning training which includes standardizing pruning terminology. The focus is on structural pruning, especially on younger trees. This training is also being incorporated into our pruning specs for future contracts

b.) Contracts

- Smith Nature Park Clearing  
Sam talked about the recent contractor clearing work along Fishinger Road at Smith Nature Park. The work removed overgrown and invasive vegetation and improved visibility and sidewalk access
- Matt reported on progress with tree removal contractors following multiple windstorms
- DLL will be the planting contractor for both spring and fall plantings

c.) Park Updates/CIP

- There will be reconstruction of the east fields at Northam Park this year, which will include reorientation of ballfields and improved usability
- Sam and Matt will do an assessment of all trees involved prior to construction and remove a few declining trees, including oaks affected by bacterial leaf scorch
- Columbia Gas is working along Northwest Blvd. to replace old lines. Sam walked the route with Jobie McCoy of JTS Tree & Landscape (the company working for Columbia Gas) to look at the health of the trees involved in the project. Trucks took out some large limbs due to the traffic rerouting that took place. Jobie pruned and removed a few trees due to damage
- Columbia Gas will be giving the city a stipend for trees that had to be removed during the project

**6. Friends of UA Parks**

- FOUAP had volunteers planting at Northwest Kiwanis Park last month and will be meeting at Smith Park on April 18

**7. Horticulture**

- Spring cleanup is ongoing

- Seasonal planters are being installed at Lane Avenue and Northam. We are also planting at The Bob Crane Community Center on the fifth-floor patios
- Additional landscaping is also planned at the Northam Tennis Facility

**8. Future meetings** – Topics and location

- June 2<sup>nd</sup> the Tree Commission would like to meet at Smith or Fancyburg Park
- Kim suggested topic for upcoming meeting: natural gas and trees

**9. Adjournment**

**Motioned:** J.P.

**First:** Kathy

**Second:** Kim

**Meeting adjourned:** 8:50 a.m.

**ATTEST:**

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**Secretary Veronica Trommer**

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**Chair J.P. Ratajczak**

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*The next Commission meeting is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 a.m.*