



Indianapolis/Marion Co. Tree Board

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at 2:30 PM

Frederick Douglass Park Family Center

1616 E 25th Street, Indianapolis, IN

Meeting Minutes

1. ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members: Katie Booth, Paula Brooks, Jerome Delbridge, Duane Smith

Non-Voting Members: Bryce Patz, Brittany Crone

Contributing Staff: Don Colvin, Jake Brinkman, Paul Pinco, Rebecca Justice

Guest: Dan Boots (City-County Council), Adam Schmutte (KIB)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Both the Minutes from 2.25.25 and 4.8.25 were presented to the Board. Katie Booth moved to approved both sets of minutes. Jerome Delbridge seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously as presented.

3. STAFFING UPDATES

- Bryce Patz provided the updates on the Urban Forestry Manager and Forestry Analyst. The Urban Forestry Manager role is currently being regraded due to expanded responsibilities. Once the regrading is completed, the position can be posted. One Forestry Analyst role was filled by Rebecca Justice. The second position has not been posted yet, as the Team is waiting for the Urban Forestry Manager to come onboard to be part of the hiring process.
- Jerome Delbridge asked the Urban Forestry Team to provide an update on how the team is structured under these roles. Paul Pinco shared that there would be the Urban Forestry Manager, Senior Forestry Analyst, and Forestry Analyst.

4. USDA USFS URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT UPDATE

- Jake Brinkman, Land Stewardship Manager, provided an update on the USDA grant. Brinkman gave a brief overview of the grant, where funding focuses on disadvantage areas within Marion County, provide education and green job skills training. Land Stewardship Team assessed 185 acres identified for management and contracts are underway.

- Paul Pinco shared that the Urban Forestry Team as made progress on tree removals and pruning through work that was identified in the 2024 tree inventory. 30,000 trees have been inventoried so far, with more inventory work to be completed this year. 500 stumps have been grounded, tree pruning and other tree maintenance tasks are moving forward with grant funds. KIB planted 700+ trees spring 2025 with additional plantings this fall specific to goals of this grant. Delbridge thanked the Urban Forestry team for their efforts while being short staffed.
- Brinkman provided an update on these Senior Ecologist and Senior Forestry Analyst roles. Those positions will be filled through Knowledge Services, a pathway for the City to hire contract staff to build capacity within the City enterprise. Those positions will be temporary contract staff to augment city staff working on this grant. Waiting for roles to be posted soon and filled.
- Paula Brooks asked if this grant could provide trees in any disadvantage area within Marion County or if all tree planting locations have already been identified, specific to the grant. Paul Pinco shared that generally, yes, funds from the grant can be used if it is in a disadvantaged area per census tracts. Brinkman and Adam Schmutte shared that if there is an area in particular, to let KIB know and as they can plan out future planting sites. Brooks shared that there is an area that had trees installed by KIB two years ago and many are dead and need to be replaced. Schmutte stated that KIB performs 3-year maintenance cycles, and this area is on the list for an inspection in the remaining 2025.

5. STRATEGIC LAND ACQUISITION FOR TREE PRESERVATION

- DPW has identified parcels for potential acquisition and seeking appraisals through consultants. The set of parcels is the Eastside Flatwoods. Don Colvin provided additional information on this process, explaining that the City must collect two appraisals and the average of those appraisals becomes the cap of how much the City can spend purchasing those lots, per State code. The property owners can either adjust their asking price, donate the difference between their asking price as a philanthropic gift, or use private funds from partners to cover the difference to the property owner's asking price. Colvin shared that for Eastside Flatwood parcels, access needs to be obtained for maintenance and park users, which is why the appraisals are looking at all three parcels. Dan Boots discussed the \$3 million that has been made available for general acquisition: \$1 million from stormwater fees, \$1 million from the City-County Council fiscal allocation, and \$1 million from Councilman Delaney on their identified project.
- Dan Boots asked if there are other parcels in the City identified for future acquisition. Brinkman stated that there are areas identified with strategic

greenspaces through the Indy Parks Master Plan. Colvin explained that in the past, when parcels are mapped and publicly posted, more challenges in acquisition process occur, such as increase of asking prices or a race in purchasing from other entities. The preferred pathway is to work with the property owners directly within those identified areas to preserve those lots as greenspace.

6. KIB - IT'S MY CITY REPORTS

- Bryce Patz shared that per DPW, there were adjustments to the Its My City Report, which include:
 - Reduce the minimum planting requirements from 1,500 trees to 1,000 trees to ensure capacity is not compromised.
 - No tree plantings within parks unless Parks requested.
 - Annual tree planting numbers determined jointly, based on summer watering capacity.
- Adam Schmutte gave an overview of both Its My City Report for the months of May and June. Specifically for this contract 427 trees were planted this spring, with the bulk of the contracted tree quantities to be planted this fall. Schmutte shared that any on the Youth Tree Team moved to Urban Naturalist team to keep KIB's efforts moving forward. Both Katie Booth and Jerome Delbridge thanked KIB for providing these reports to better understand their efforts in the community.

7. SUB-COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

- Patz shared that in past meetings there were discusses on creating sub-committees to build capacity of the Tree Board to support City efforts. Those committees include:
 - Outreach and Education Committee
 - Policy/Ordinance Committee
 - Current Review Assistance
 - From the 4.8.2025 meeting, there was a decision that this type of role should be an internal staff assistance committee where Tree Board members can assist in training City staff who review plans on what to look for regarding trees.

- Patz shared that he would follow up with the Board to begin structuring those subcommittees between August and the October meeting, so work can begin with those sub-committees.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- Clark Kahlo, volunteer from the Indiana Forest Alliance shared a book called *Shade: The Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource* by Sam Bloch.
- Carbon Credits Update: Don Colvin shared an update from the carbon credit process for Eagle Creek Park. Colvin stated the next step is to select a broker through the request for proposal process to sell the carbon credits. The city prefers to have local companies purchase the credits but is open to the national market if no local companies show interest.
- The goal to build capacity of the Tree Board to have a stronger role in preserving trees in the City. Boots provided the history of how the Tree Board came to be for context. Boots shared possible pathways to develop more authority of the Board, including empowering the Tree Board to oversee land acquisitions for tree preservation efforts, plan reviews through the zoning process, and take in donations to support land acquisition. Boots discussed that the Heritage Tree Ordinance needs more authority to protect these assets and drafting an ordinance to do that is important. Boots also shared that there could be another entity that that Tree Board collaborates with as it depends on how the ordinance takes shape. Paula Brooks asked if there was consideration for an entity to be developed like the Park Alliance to support the land acquisition portion. Boots stated that it is early in the development stage and that what the structure would look like, either through the Tree Board or another body is still in the works. Paula Brooks ask Boots if the Tree Board could support the process of ordinance draft, which Boots shared there is a rough draft that is not ready to be shared but will keep the Tree Board in mind when ready for input.

9. ADJOURN

- The next upcoming Indianapolis/Marion County Tree Board meeting will be held on October 14, 2025 at 2:30 pm at Frederick Douglass Park Family Center. Jerome Delbridge moved to adjourn. Duane Smith seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:37 pm.