

Urban Forestry Advisory Board

Minutes of March 12, 2025

Members Present: Mr. Gerald Checco, Chair; Ms. Maria Dienger; Ms. Berteena Rollins; Mr. Mark Bambach; Ms. Angie Strunc; Mr. Bob Vickrey.

Members Absent: Mr. Scott Bererlein and Mr. Garrett Dienno

Staff Present: Ms. Tiffany Hendrickson; Mr. Jon Harmon; Ms. Crystal Courtney; Mr. Jacob Edwards; Ms. Hailey Buhlrlage and Mr. Doug Fritsch

Meeting: Mr. Checco called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. A Quorum was in attendance.

Meeting Agenda: Gerald motioned to add Community Engagement item to the March meeting agenda. All in favor of addition.

Meeting Minutes of Previous Meeting: A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of December 11th, 2025, all members were in favor.

Monthly Activity Report: Jacob Edwards covered all updates on the preventative maintenance schedule. PM on the east side is complete, and PM is on a six-year cycle. PM is completed by the in-house crew with more complicated trees (utility wires and larger trees) handled by the city contractor. Jacob highlighted the stump contracting with Grey's. Urban Forestry has 1,400 backlogged stumps across the city. Goal is to have all stumps completed in 6-7 months. Community list are given to Grey's daily and in February 350 stumps were completed by Grey's, TCI completed 100 and 60 park stumps were done in-house. Grey's team is focusing on one area at a time when grinding instead of hopping neighborhood to neighborhood.

Urban Forestry:

Crystal Courtney mentioned that city council passed the 2028 Assessment at the last meeting and notices have been sent to property owners. 2029 would be the next year UF could ask for another assessment fee increase. Crystal highlighted that UF damage claims have started and the UF foresters had to attend small claim court. UF also received it's Tree City USA designation for the year, Growth Award and Tree City of the World award.

Arbor Day 2026:

Mr. Doug Fritsch, the South/Central Forester will be leading the 2026 Arbor Day. This year the event will be hosted at Rothenberg Preparatory Academy on April 24th 9AM-12PM. UFAB members are encouraged to attend. 19 sites have been identified for plantings at the school campus and nearby lots. 6 trees will be planted at Grant Recreation Center a block away from campus. Doug is attending OTR council meetings to identify more planting locations and discuss the details of the event with community leaders and residents.

CMC 743:

Mr. Jon Harmon gave updates on CMC 743, Law department is bringing a code change ordinance that UF will review, and final steps would go to Jason Barron and then City Manager. The ordinance will include changes to the language of what is a right of way tree, emergency tree removals, fee's on permits and adding a member to the UFAB board that has environmental and sustainability background.

Community Engagement:

Mr. Mark Bambach highlighted the need for board members to engage with community councils to inform communities about the work of the Cincinnati Urban Forestry Program. The neighborhood summit is an option for community outreach, 2026 neighborhood summit is April 25th, 2026. Gerald will call a contact to see if they're still accepting speakers.

Meeting Adjournment: Mr. Gerald Checco adjourned at 11:23 am

Meeting: The next regular meeting of the UFAB will be held April 9th, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at the ***Bettman Natural Resource Center, 4 Beech Lane.***

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald R. Checco", written over a horizontal line.

Gerald R. Checco, Chair