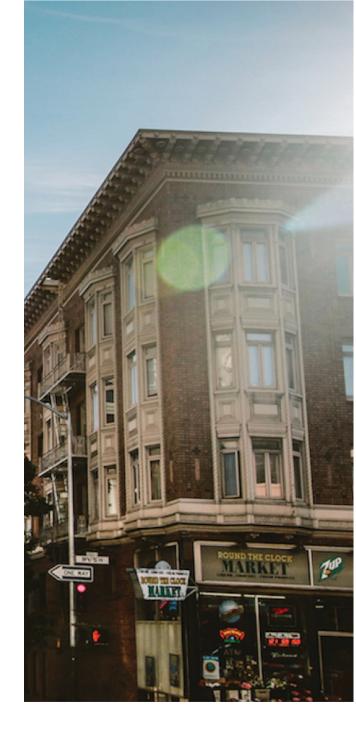


# The Year of the Tree in Springfield: 2020

# Springfield Urban Forestry Commission

City of Springfield, Illinois James O. Langfelder, Mayor

December 8, 2020



#### AParticularly Difficult Year

The Springfield Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) is pleased to share this report of its 2020 accomplishments and its plans for 2021. The year 2020 was a difficult one for cities and states across the country due to the pandemic, and especially problematic for the UFC, which had only been created in August 2019-- just months before the State implemented a stay-at-home order for public health reasons. Nevertheless, 2020 was an eventful and successful year. Operating with volunteer Commissioners and assistance from City personnel, specifically the City Arborist Jeffrey M. Reim, the UFC worked diligently during the year toward its mission of providing guidance to the City on management of our urban forest. Thanks to the teamwork of the City Arborist, the Public Works Department, volunteers, and the participating public, the UFC was able to enhance the City's natural beauty through good tree stewardship."

#### The Many Benefits of Trees and an Urban Forest

Trees provide many benefits to cities and their residents. Here are the top ten documented benefits of trees:

Trees Tame Stormwater
Trees Fight Climate Change
Trees Fight Air Pollution
Trees Can Save Energy
Trees Provide Habitat for Wildlife
Trees Add to Property Values
Trees Can be an Economic Stimulus
Trees Contribute to the Community's Physical/Mental Wellbeing
Trees Provide Beauty and Privacy
Trees Provide Neighborhood Security

### UFC 2020 Accomplishments

and Secretary;
City Tree Planting in Fall/Winter 2019;
Development of a Tree Plan;
Revision (by the City Arborist) and approval of the Arboricultural Specifications
Manual;
Application for (by the City Arborist) and award of a Grant of 200 bare-root oak
trees; in celebration of 2020 Arbor Day many were given to City residents to plantin
their yard or parkway; and some were planted along Stanford Avenue;
Advising City Arborist including regarding parkway Permits; grated downtown trees,
and tree selection;
Educational Activities/Programs: In January, Mike Brunk, the Urban Forestry
Administrator at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") presented an
educational program on Urban Forestry at the Lincoln Public Library; In February,
Dr. McEuen gave a presentation at Lincoln Library about the value and care of trees

Development of Bylaws and Rules of Procedure, Appointment of a Chair, Vice-Chair,

	Development of a Website <a href="http://www.springfield.il.us/UFC">http://www.springfield.il.us/UFC</a> (with the assistance of
	City personnel);
	Recommendation and began development of a Memorial Tree Planting Program;
	Submission of an Application for an Urban & Community Forestry Grant of up to
	\$20,000, through Morton Arboretum and the DNR, for a Tree Inventory;
	Notification that Springfield was ranked #1 in its region for the Morton Arboretum
	Grant for a Tree Inventory; the Grant is anticipated to cover the costs of a Tree
	Inventory of one quadrant of Springfield; Contractor bids are due to the Morton
	Arboretum on Monday, December 14th; and Morton Arboretum will make a decision
	regarding the size of the Grant based upon the bids, shortly thereafter;
	Submission of a Tree City USA application (prepared by the City Arborist);
	Submission of an Application (prepared by the City Arborist) for the Arbor Day
	Foundation "Tree City Growth Award, which is awarded to communities that
	demonstrate higher levels of tree care and community engagement;
	Collaboration with the Land of Lincoln Community College Academy of Lifelong
	Learning for the Sangamon County Big Read, based on a Grant from the National
	Endowment for the Arts and featuring Lab Girl by Hope Jahren; and
	2021 Arbor Day Event planning.
UFC	2021 Plans
	Planting 500 diverse trees throughout the City (Contractor/City Arborist);
	Conducting a Tree Inventory (Contractor) of one quadrant of the City with funds
	from Morton Arboretum/DNR Grant;
	Implementation of Tree Plan;
	Application for another tree grant, and, if successful, tree give away;
	March 31, Jan Von Qualen will be a speaker at the Big Read program, "Urban Trees:
	Planning, Policy, and Planting," sponsored by the Citizens Club and the Center for
	State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois;
	April 2, the UFC will participate in the Big Read with the presentation of "Plant an
	Illinois Native Tree: Support a Food Chain," by Dr. Amy McEuen;
	April 27, Arbor Day Celebration at the Boys and Girls Club of Springfield;
	Implementation of a Memorial Tree Planting Program;
	Educational Programs; and

### UFC 2021 Budget Request

The UFC remains passionate about the importance of the urban forest and dedicated to maintaining and improving it. The UFC is asking for a budget of \$125,000 to be used to purchase and plant 500 trees; to continue the quadrant-by-quadrant Tree Inventory, and to fund the Arbor Day and other forestry related events. The UFC is cognizant that the difficulties of 2020 have encompassed the entire City and will continue to affect the City throughout the 2021 Budget Year. The UFC will continue to take advantage of grant opportunities; will help the Forestry Division implement a memorial tree program; and will explore other methods of stretching the Forestry budget.

☐ Engagement of City Residents/Students in Tree Advocacy.

#### **UFC** Members

Jan Von Qualen, Chair

Amy McEuen, Vice-Chair

Rianne Hawkins, Secretary

Susan Allen

Randy Belville

Ernestine Lawrence

Jeffrey M. Reim, City Arborist (ex-officio/non-voting)

Nathan Bottom, Public Works Director (ex-officio/non-voting)

John Davis, General Manager of Public Utilities (ex-officio/non-voting)

