



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Ladd Arboretum Committee**

Monday, June 2, 2014  
7:00pm  
Evanston Ecology Center

Members Present: Virginia Beatty, Barbara DeCoster, Tracy Hubbard, Pam Johnson, Jim LaRochelle, Louise Taylor

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Paul D'Agostino, Assistant Director of Public Works, Parks/Forestry, Beth Cullen, Clerk III

Guests: Charles Smith, Doug MacDonald, Ann

Presiding Member: Virginia Beatty

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**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Virginia Beatty at 7:00pm and a quorum was established.

**2. March 17, 2014 Board Minutes**

Alternate minutes were presented.

**3. Staff Reports**

- The Pollinator Project work is being done. The areas are laid out. These are two spots adjacent to the raised beds and the "bridge" area in the parking lot. On Thursday June 12, the people involved in this project will be walking the garden space and at 7pm there will be a ribbon cutting. The 5000 plugs are coming from a source in Wisconsin and will be here on Friday, June 13.
- Bridge Street construction update: The River Birch was relocated to the Civic Center. The Circle Drive should be accessible for the start of Camp. The project is projected to be completed July 1. The repairs of the surrounding grounds will continue in July.

**4. New Business**

- LAC member Kathie Biddle passed away on March 31, 2014. Ms. Beatty spoke of her accomplishments and shared a picture of her. Flowers were presented and a moment of silence was observed.
- Ms. Beatty has been asked by the Rules Committee to have a survey taken by this Committee. She passed out a survey for the Committee to take that evening. The Committee discussed this survey, filled them out individually and returned them to Ms. Beatty.
- Mr. LaRochelle has provided a list of all marked, dedicated trees in the Arboretum. He has included GPS coordinates. This list is in a labeled binder and available in the Ecology Center office. The Committee formally recognized Mr. LaRochelle's commitment to the Arboretum. Ms. Hubbard suggested that the information be "Google mapped" and Ms. Beatty stated she was working on this.
- Mr. LaRochelle wanted to remind the Committee that there was \$575 collected on behalf of the Ladd Arboretum in a fundraising effort and the EEA was holding this money.
- Mr. LaRochelle reminds the Committee that his resignation becomes effective with the September meeting which is the end of his term.
- Mr. LaRochelle would like permission to clean and weed in the Grady Bird Sanctuary area. Specific weeds and dead material was identified in specific areas. Mr. Smith, who originally worked on this space, suggested some of the material be knocked down to become habitat. Mr.

LaRochelle then requested to remove dandelions and other weeds on the berm and at either end of Arboretum Motion was made and permission granted for this work to be done in the whole of the Arboretum. Mr. Smith asked to make a statement about weeding. He said that pollinators were a picky group. The greater variety of vegetation means a greater variety of pollinators. Removal of flowering plants from a system creates an upset. Removal of dandelions in the beds will not upset the Arboretum's ecology.

## **5. Unfinished Business**

- Mr. Smith was appalled at the idea of paving in the Arboretum. There are two things that have come up: People have argued passionately about the pathway. People that have knowledge about the Arboretum have not been heard. This has been presented as a mud puddle with no drainage because of the clay soil. The other thing that came out of the information was this was being regarded as a way for children to get to and from school or as a park, not as an Arboretum. The purpose of the Arboretum's small 17 acres is to be a habitat for trees, animals, birds and plants, not for people. We should be looking to maintain this as the healthiest natural environment for the benefit of natural things so we can visit and observe and see this is like nowhere else. The need for this multiuse trail was described in contradiction of the purpose and function of this space. There was a lot of talk about the need for kids to use this as a means to get to school. This is not the only one or the best one. Mr. Smith came down her a few mornings to see what the kids did. He saw between eight and twelve kids that used the Arboretum.
- A chart was prepared by staff and two things emerged. There were two options, an asphalt path and a gravel path, well not really gravel. It is a product called Stabilizer. Mr. Smith contacted the manufacturer of this product and was sent specs that describe material that is ADA approved and LEED acceptable which means it is a green product. It is an exceptional material that is used by many local institutions including the Morton Arboretum and the Chicago Botanic Garden. This has been the product of choice because it is best for the environment. It provides drainage and is visually compatible with the surroundings. If you take this chart and the same criteria to build the path it is not nearly so skewed as it would seem. When they created the specifications for this path it was a comparison of crushed granite with stabilizer or concrete. In this asphalt was the consideration.
- Mr. Smith agrees this path as it is designed is not safe. You would have to do some things to make this safe like remove some things which is exactly what we are trying to prevent. The berm was built there to reduce noise at the Grady Bird Sanctuary. You can sit in the Grady Bird Sanctuary and enjoy that it is quiet, serene and secluded. The Police chief would say it is dangerous; almost anything can happen there. You can see woodpeckers, sparrows and lots of other things there. Conversations have been had with City officials. Safety is the issue. A walk-thru will be done and possibly other options will be examined. There is already a trail 400 yards away that is described exactly as the grant trail is described; eight feet wide, asphalt, with good sightings, lighted and ploughed as needed. Mr. Smith would not want to defend the proposed Arboretum path in Springfield or with other organizations. How does one walk the meandering paths of the Arboretum and appreciate nature when bikes are zippin' by?
- Ms. Hubbard is very concerned with kids' safety. She also spoke about biking community and the grant status .Mr. Smith described biking along McCormick and when you hit the Arboretum, it's like stepping back in time. "And there are no bikes. There are people walking side by side-it's a whole different atmosphere." He is not willing to give that up. Mr. Macdonald stated that in his opinion if kids safety is the issue, they should go on path that is patrolled before and after school. Other options for safety were discussed. Also mentioned was the Hill Arboretum apartments and no one had come over to talk to them about the proposed pathway.

## **6. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 8:28pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Ladd Arboretum Committee will be July 21, 2014 at 7PM at the Evanston Ecology Center.

Minutes respectfully submitted for approval by:  
Beth Cullen, Clerk III Evanston Ecology Center