



VERMONT URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

Quarterly Council Meeting

June 14, 2023

UVM

Minutes

Attending: Richard Amore, Josh Behounek, Chris Campamy, VJ Comai, Celia Danks, Bonnie Donahue, Savannah Ferriera, Laura Edling (UVM Faculty), Julie Frost (UVM Grad student), Joanne Garton, Danielle Gift (US Forest Service), William Jewell, Ann Hazlerigg, Gwen Kozlowski, Melissa Levy, Bob McCullough, Tessa McGann, Tim Parsons, Sara Packer, Darren Schibler, Elise Schadler, Tim Smith, Scott Wunderle,

Welcome and Council Business

- March meeting minutes: reviewed and approved (Darren Schibler made a motion to approve, Richard Amore seconded.)
- Council recommitment letters will go out this month. Consider annual commitments and ability to attend quarterly meetings.
- Mileage reimbursements available for members; instructions live on the council private page.
- There is a vacant council seat. Possible areas include:
 - Dept. Fish and Wildlife
 - Dept. of Conservation
 - ANR Climate Office of Environmental Justice Office
 - Vermont Council on Rural Development
 - County forester
- Arborist apprenticeship program (VTC)
- Council suggestions: new faculty member, NRCS, Dept of Health, health equity assessment (Amanda Froeschle (amanda.froeschle@vermont.gov); review previous interested council members

Federal Updates

Danielle Gift, USFS Regional Urban & Community Forestry, coordinator for 7 states; will have intern to support grant administration; will engage with state council and volunteer coordinators.

IRA updates

- \$250 million allocated for states; Vermont received \$750,000, serving disadvantaged communities.
- Roughly \$1 billion available for public applications that were due June 1. Grant portal was extended until Sunday night. 60 reviewers of applications, not forest service. Announcements on track for October 1.
- Winooski, Rutland and Newport put in applications (Rutland: \$7.7 million application, most of it is downtown for 100 silva cells; green belt restoration)

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Town Forest Census

Council member Cecilia Danks, Laura Edling, Julie Frost presented on the NRCS-funded Town Forest Census project.

- This information will assist agencies, land trust for capacity building to enhance local capacity and sustainable management.
- Build upon recent forest surveys (VT town forest governance, NH, USFS nationwide)
- Specific objectives:
- Fill in gaps in existing inventory and maps
- Establish and conduct a replicable statewide census of all town forests
- Analyze data and create scholarly and practitioner products to expand understanding of the role town forest in promoting community well being.
- Areas identified for 1st census: Governance, Impacts from pandemic, Economic benefits and costs, and Carbon market potential
- Additional topics: Land acknowledgements, traditional stewardship, use right by indigenous peoples; Health impacts of town forests
- Timeline: Survey out and complete by end of December
- Council suggestions: User conflicts, impediments to town forest developments; who manages town forest; are they following plan; usage of trails;
- Chris Company may be able to support facilitating survey to towns through regional planning commissions

Program Updates

- Community Canopy: 750 trees to Burlington, St. Albans, and Bellows Falls
- Pride tree planted in Windsor
- Resilient urban forests grant wrapping up in Lyndon and Windsor
- Forest pest outreach: spotted lanternfly

Funding, Grants & How to do it well!

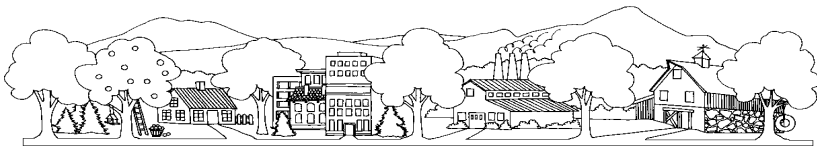
- Timeline for following grants: August release, applications due in January; under agreement by April
- Grant ranges will increase (\$5000-50,000 instead of 1,000-5000)
- State grants are reimbursement grant
- Planning for a common application for grants

ARPA (Urban Tree Planting Project)- administered by block grantor, TBD

- \$550,000 for urban tree planting block grant
- Timeframe: 2024/25; spent down by 9/26
- Eligible activities:
 - An organization will be selected to implement a grant program for street and park tree planting in downtowns, neighborhoods, urban areas

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- Aligns with goals in the Vermont Climate Action Plan
- Aligns with state water quality/stormwater mitigation goals
- Eligibility: All communities eligible, priority will be given to applicants that align with:
 - National Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
 - VT Department of Health's Social Vulnerability Index
 - Vermont defined Urban Areas with less than 40% tree canopy cover
- No match!

Council concerns: can't be planted near utility lines; nursery stock availability; directions for planting in state right-of-way- follow new procedure; resources on tree procurement options; explicit eligible activities.

Inflation Reduction Act (administered by UCF)

- \$600,000 over 5 years; \$300,000 for first year
- 2-3 annual grant rounds (TBD)
- Funded projects will have a 2-year project period
- No match
- Eligible activities: Will align with priorities for the national Inflation Reduction Act Urban Forestry grants: Planning, community engagement, tree planting, canopy assessments, workforce development
- Eligibility: Disadvantaged Communities, as defined by the US Forest Service using the following tools:
 - National Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
 - National HUD Opportunity Zones
 - National HUD Low-Moderate Income areas

Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer

- \$125,000
- 2024 grants, 1-year project period
- Eligible activities: Public ash tree removals in urban areas
 - Replanting of trees to replace removed ash
 - Interplanting of trees between ash
 - Establishment or enhancement of community tree nurseries
 - Removals and replanting on private land provided the proper agreements are in place (liability issues)
- 1:1 match
- TBD; must be in "urban areas" and may use UCF's updated Urban Tree Canopy layer; can include 0.5 mile around downtown area.

Caring for Canopy Grants

- \$70,000 (anticipated)
- 2024, 1 year project

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- Eligible activities: Any activity that supports moving a community's urban and community forestry program forward
- 1:1 match
- Open to all municipalities, higher education institutions, and non-profit organizations

Fruit and Nut Grant

- ~\$8,000
- 2023 grants, 1-year projects
- Eligible Activities:
 - Fruit and nut tree planting at community garden sites
 - Site preparation, plant maintenance
- No match
- Eligibility: Community garden sites in Vermont (schools, affordable housing communities, non-profits, community gardens, educational centers, food co-ops, libraries, etc.)

Council Discussion

- Provide clear information about eligibility for different grant program with maps and community lists
- How do pre-populate applications, so a community can re-use application
- Provide notice to towns to try and prevent replicating forest service snafu!
- Tool to help communities: Webinar/workshop for eligibility

Additional Questions for Council

- What is challenging about developing projects
- How could grant application process be improved?
- Who should know about this?
- What question do you have or anticipate about this funding?

UVM Campus Master Plan Presentation

University of Vermont recently adopted its Campus 2022-2032. The purpose of the Campus Plan is to articulate a vision and direction for the transformation of the physical components of the campus, and to provide a document that will guide and control that vision to ensure its proper and logical implementation over time. The plan includes among many other things architectural and landscape guidelines for each area of campus, UVM-owned natural areas located across Vermont, landscape enhancement examples (including the historic University Green), and open space and landscape priorities. Claire Forbes, Associate Planner for UVM and Lisa Kingsbury, Associate Director of Planning for UVM, presented on the new plan and its development and lead a campus tour.

Meeting Adjourned

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