

Meeting: NKUCFC Member Meeting

Date: February 15, 2017 @ 12 pm

Location: UK Ag Extension – Rouse Room

Chairperson: Crystal Courtney

Secretary: Tara Sturgill

In Attendance: Tara Sturgill, Crystal Courtney, Mathew Frantz, Chris Kaeff, Kris Stone, Mary Ann Shultz, Timothy Back, Ann Anderson, Steve Skaggs, Jason Roberts, Sarah Gracey, DJ Scully, Doris Schnetzer, Rosie Santos, Rex McBride, Mike Klahr, Joseph McMilkin, and Gina Ligon.

1. Welcome

Crystal welcomed everyone to the meeting today. Introductions around the table of those in attendance of meeting. Crystal thanked everyone for the introductions and explained the basis of this meeting. Crystal explained where to find the minutes and other NKUCFC (the Council) documents, like the proposed changes to the bylaw document on the website (the ABOUT page).

2. Discussion and recap of last year

Crystal explained needs assessment (2015) – and the low attendance of meetings (mostly leaders); retreat in 2015 – Strategic Planning process (Lori Garkovich) – 3 Strategic Planning sessions over 2015 – community input requested and received at these meetings. Crystal explained that we had general membership meetings in the evenings, feedback had been that people didn't want to go to boring meetings while having Steering Committee meetings every month to discuss and implement the Strategic Plan. Crystal explained the purpose of the Steering Committee (Financial, Membership Structure, and Programs). Crystal submitted that the goal was begin implementing the changes brought on by the Strategic Plan and Steering Committee initiatives in 2017. Rosie asked about looking at high level goals, we are not going through everything we have discussed in terms of changes but generally.

Doris added that if the meetings are boring we need to add a nature joke, or something to lighten the mood. Sarah said that is a “tree-mendous” idea. Mathew explained that it is very important to have these meetings and they are not boring. Tara explained that this meeting is to present the bylaw changes in order to change them because that is how the current bylaws state that we have to do that, in essence that is a large goal of this meeting. Rosie explained that there is a chair for everyone in the group and the point of all of this is to become more organized.

3. Initial Review of Strategic Plan

Crystal explained her three-tier approach (education (e.g., Public Workers Tree Seminar); technical; boots on the ground (trees in the ground)). Crystal submitted that we spent a long time on the Strategic Plan and suggested that those present have a look at it. Crystal read the Vision Statement from the Strategic Plan. Rosie pointed out that we struck “man-made” and inserted “built” – Crystal discussed the Goals that were brought about in terms of the Strategic Plan. Crystal presented the Council's Program Survey Results and read off some of those that responded. Crystal explained what they identified as in terms of professions.

Rosie clarified what the purpose of the survey was to get an idea of who identified as a Council member – what the make-up is and what they think. Survey section 2.3 (redundant and or unnecessary programs) – Crystal explained the programs that seemed most important to people from the survey. Crystal expressed the idea is to merge KY Roots, Taking Root, and Reforest NKY into one program.

Crystal further explained the Goals within our Strategic Plan. Goal 6 states that the first action is to revise bylaws of the organization and that is why we are here today. Crystal submitted that the old bylaws were 4 pages, the edited bylaws are 10 pages. Crystal pointed out that she became President without being prepared due to the former President leaving, she turned to the bylaws for guidance and realized that they did not offer much help.

Crystal reviewed Amendments section and explained why we are here. Rosie pointed out that it will be an up or down vote at the March 15th Member Meeting to either approve or not approve the bylaw changes. Rosie said that any suggestion be sent to Crystal and comments can be submitted on the bylaw document itself via the link on the ABOUT page to Google Docs, and she encouraged people to use that.

4. Review of important bylaw changes

Rosie explained that other non-profits were consulted, as well as Lori Garcovich, and it was a very thoughtful and lengthy process. Crystal submitted that the minutes should be consulted in order to know how we got here – Executive Committee, Board Meeting, Steering Committee that are all located on the ABOUT page of the Council's website.

Crystal submitted that she planned on covering the highlights of the bylaw changes and explained the process of the Vision and Mission Statement update. Crystal explained the difference between Articles of Incorporation and bylaws in terms of filing with the Secretary of State to be a non-profit.

Membership

Crystal introduced that a problem stated to her over and over was that a lot of active program members (i.e., Reforest NKY Committee members) were not identifying as a member of the Council and had not been signing off on the Volunteer Agreement. Crystal stated that the goal for the bylaw changes on this subject is to give people a buy-in as members. Crystal said that the bylaws will basically define what it is to be a member not necessarily decide a payment for dues, etc, that will be in a procedural document. Crystal further explained everything in the bylaws have been ironed out though there are other documents that will need to be produced upon acceptance of the bylaw changes. Rosie submitted that bylaws are supposed to be general as to not have to amend them constantly, that is what procedural documents are for, that can be amended often, as the bylaws should not be amended often. Crystal outlined the membership categories (individual categories and group categories) asked about suggestions for fee models from anyone.

Membership meeting

Crystal outlined the plan that membership meetings are proposed to be professional networking meetings that offer project updates, needs assessment, less actual business meetings. Rosie submitted the Trees in our Community Forum (TIOC Forum) will be the annual membership meeting in which a financial report, programs report, etc, will be provide as well as welcome new Board members and thank outgoing

Board members. Crystal proposed that there will be 4 general membership meetings (2 daytime, 2 evening). Crystal referred to the survey to talk about meeting times as most respondents wanted an evening meeting, and that professional networking meetings will be open to everyone. Crystal explained that either there will be 4 membership meetings, maybe including TIOC, maybe not, could be 5 meetings including TIOC. Crystal said that this will not include “fun meetings” like tree walks, pub crawls, those will be separate.

Crystal submitted that the purpose of the Steering Committee was to implement the Strategic Plan and explained the formation of the Board of Directors (the Board). Executive Committee used to be officers plus anyone has ever held office, that is being changed in the bylaws. The Executive Committee will not include all past officers, it will include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the last immediate President to serve the term. Crystal explained that that if you want to be a deciding member of the Council then make an effort to become a member of the Board, that is how it will work after the acceptance of the bylaws.

Elections

Crystal submitted that nominations will be taken from membership-at-large in August, September we will supply bios to membership of nominees for Board and Executive Committee voting will occur and announcement at TIOC of those elected. Crystal explained that all the sections of the existing bylaws are included in the new bylaws, except for Section 4. Crystal showed that Section 4 was pulled and will be incorporated in a procedural document eventually. Crystal said that the Council is not pulling from those listed in the section and should not be contained in the bylaws.

Committees

Rosie clarified the “Committees” we currently have now, goal is the Committee chair to be a Board member, and that the Board is still clarifying the committee structures, etc. Rosie supplied that historically we have had great committed program committee members that don’t really feel like a Council member. The role of the election process is to make the transcendence to leadership more structured. Crystal explained Standing Committees which are Executive Committee and Finance and Audit Committee. Programs are Ad-Hoc Committees which will all have procedural documents which are to come. Crystal reiterated for everyone to review the Strategic Plan and explained the work that Lori Garkovich put into the document with the input of the Council and the community at-large.

Crystal submitted that we need to define what the committees will be before people being signing up for them at this time. Crystal asked for any questions, comments, or concerns, and any feedback on changes as proposed. Crystal said that the bylaws document is on the website and able to be edited via Google Docs for the general membership. Rosie explained that the plan is to do an up or down vote to ALL of the proposed changes to the bylaws.

5. Project Updates

Great Tree Summit

Kris updated the group on the Great Tree Summit put on by Taking Root – hosted here at the Enrichment Center (\$10) to attend. Tom Smart as speaker, he will be talking about the Louisville Greenway

including a bridge planting which is very exciting. Kris explained he feels that would be great for Cincinnati as well and expressed his interest in having as many people attend as are able. Kris said if you want to volunteer the fee is waived, and that registration is low, and asked for everyone to please spread the word. Saturday Feb. 25th – 9:30. Someone submitted that the date is the first day of the Home and Garden Show and that could be affecting registration. Mike asked about it being on Facebook. Kris said yes. Kris said that after speaking Tom will be open for any questions for those participating.

Public Workers Tree Seminar

DJ Scully submitted that Gina and Rex are hosting the Public Workers Tree Seminar (PWTS) on March 9th at the Boone County Enrichment Center. DJ passed around the brochure to the group and discussed the speakers and offerings of the PWTS. DJ explained that you can register online and Kris can answer any questions about registration and the program. Kris said that there will be another push for email communication. Mathew asked if changes can be made to the brochure in order to add Crystal's name to his talk and Gina said she will add Crystal's name for Mathew. Crystal requested that DJ be added as well.

Reforest Northern Kentucky

Tara gave an update on Reforest NKY (RNKY), event to be held on March 25th 9:30 – 12:30. Tara explained the general Public Relations promotion of the event and the differences from years past (e.g., pre-sale tshirts during registration rather than giving away free event tshirts, which historically have been the most expensive part of the event), potential for a free, reusable bag to be given to volunteers with their take-home tree. Rosie pointed out that this is the 10th anniversary of the event as well. Tara explained that registration is open and offered the flyer to those present to spread the word.

Kentucky State Urban Forestry Council

Crystal asked Sarah Gracey to update the group on the KY State Urban Forestry Council (KYUFC). Sarah submitted that the KYUFC has about 18 members from different avenues and professions in KY. Sarah explained the upcoming initiatives for 2017 which were discussed in the October meeting. Sarah submitted there were two needs discussed at that meeting and one is that there is a need to have professional training for the I-Tree software. Sarah stated she is working on getting the training together and making contacts for the training. Sarah stated she will be surveying those that would be participants for the pilot program. Sarah asked to let her know your interest and to contact her to be put on email list.

Sarah explained there is a need for a scholarship bank for those that want to be certified arborists in areas outside of the "golden triangle". Doris asked if you have to be arborist to take care of trees. Sarah explained just because someone might be a certified arborist doesn't mean they will do a fantastic job. Sarah explained that a common issue is that homeowners don't know where to go for professional tree care and end up going with someone that knocks on their door claiming there is a problem with a tree, and the tree might get topped. Sarah said as a state employee, when she gets calls about tree issues from homeowners, all she can do is suggest that they use a certified arborist and offer the www.treesaregood.org site which is a vehicle to find a ISA certified arborist near you for tree care needs.

Crystal asked if there are any other projects that anyone wants to submit and discuss.

Chris brought up that March 11th the Kenton County Conservation District, Kenton Conservancy and Banklick Watershed Council will be completing invasive species (i.e., pear and olive) management day – need cutters, draggers, and sprayers. Chris explained will be a follow up planning event in April. Chris explained the effort is not being advertised but looking for volunteers for the day. Contact Chris for more information.

Rosie submitted an update from the City of Covington. Rosie said that trees and trails big in Covington. Rosie introduced that the City of Covington is beginning a stewardship program for residents or any other person that is passionate about trees in the urban environment that wants to be involved with events with trail maintenance, tree planting events, etc. Rosie said no dates to share at this point but if there is interest contact herself or Crystal to be put into the loop when information comes out.

Tara offered an update for the NKY Taking Root Action team. Tara explained that Lorna Harrell, Jessica Spencer, and herself have been working on the dedication of the Mary Kathryn Dickerson (MKD) Educational Grove in Tower Park. Tara explained a little bit about Taking Root and Make a Difference Day which was the initiative that produced the MKD Educational Grove over a series of plantings. Tara submitted that the area was chose due to the canopy destruction by emerald ash borer. Tara introduced that there will be a dedication ceremony on June 10th in which the signs (educational and memorial) will be official dedicated to MKD. Tara talked about the funding for the MKD grove was provided by a Taking Root grant (\$1,000) in order to offer a match for our application to Campbell County Conservation District Grant for Tree Planting and Urban Forest Enhancement. Chris asked how much that grant was for – Tara said \$1,700. Tara explained that the City of Fort Thomas has been helpful with watering and providing mulch and will be recognized on the signs and during the dedication, as well as the Center for Environmental Restoration that offered the area to plant (part of their conservation easement in Tower Park). Tara invited anyone interested to come to the dedication ceremony on the 10th and she will update everyone on the specific time asap.

Sarah offered that if there is anyone present that is not on her listserv for the KY Division of Forestry she would like to put anyone on there that wishes to be because she will be updating via email (one a month usually). Sara said an upcoming event that will go out via email is a free Urban Forestry Workshops in collaboration with Dr. Fountain, the goal being to offer in less-serviced areas of KY – away from the “golden triangle” – the workshops will be limited to 25 people except for the Boone County (May 1st and 2nd) since the Enrichment facility is so large Workshops will be 2 days and people go to either day Sarah said it is organized as workshop level 1 which is geared more toward tree board members, council members, general public, and workshop level 2 which is geared more towards professionals.

Tim apologized for not being more involved and made an offer to the Council in tandem with having a new forestry-related business (a nursery). Tim offered to donate time to plant trees, if the Council has a place to plant a tree, he will do it for free (new trees, transplanted trees; large trees) Tim offered to plant trees for Council initiatives for free (potentially 3 times per year, for large trees). Tim explained that one of his customers turned 100 and he promised that he would plant her a tree and he planted the tree at the customer’s church at her request. He knows how important trees are for ceremonials and offered his time to plant large trees. Rosie suggested that Make a Difference Day could be a program in which we could

enlist Tim's help. Crystal submitted that we can promote through local tree boards and Crystal thanked Tim for his kind offer.

Doris offered to play an original poem written by herself, set to music about trees and how they communicate and their importance at a membership outing/meeting sometime. Doris explained that it is set to music by Dickson's violin. Crystal asked if she would like to present it now. Doris offered to play it at a mixer. Crystal offered that maybe we could put it on our website. Presentation of Doris's poem to the group. Doris also offered that Brian Robertson had helped with the recording.

Crystal motioned to adjourn at 1:21. Rosie seconded.