

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TREE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18th, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Tree Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:10pm at the Village of Franklin Park Police Station, community room, located at 9451 W. Belmont Avenue, Franklin Park, IL 60131.

Member Michael led the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:11pm

ROLL CALL

Tree Preservation Members: Les Grahn, Ramona Michael

Absent: Katarina Modrich

Bee Committee members: Mary Ellen Smolen, Violet Pamintuan

Absent: Monika Surovych

Present: Trustee Karen Special, SFFPD Andrew Smolen

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 21st, 2026

July 21st, 2026 minutes approved

1st ME Smolen

2nd Violet Pamintuan

BUSINESS

The Tree Commission welcomed Village Commissioner Nick Weber, and Ted Spears, (Spear Development, 'Grand Ave Corridor Project') to the meeting. Ted Spears is working on the Grand avenue rain gardens on the North-East and North-west corners of Grand Avenue from Scott to Gustav. Ted welcomed plant species ideas from the Tree members. Member Pamintuan compiled an extensive listing of plant species sorted by height and offered sharing it for possible ideas. The members had several questions regarding proposed future scheduled maintenance, overwintering, irrigation and tree species being planted. Red Maples are scheduled for planting, and watered via underground irrigation.

Trustee Special mentioned noted maintenance is necessary to avoid a weedy outcome. Commissioner Weber noted that we cannot allow the pollinator gardens to become difficult to manage. Given the Village's limited staffing and budget resources, it is important to maintain them in a way that is both attractive and well-kept. He emphasized that we must consider how residents will perceive the garden and evaluate it from that perspective.

Commissioner Weber explained that the Pacific rain garden is intended for water retention. Efforts are currently underway to eliminate parking access from Grand Avenue. A third contractor will be responsible for installing the underdrains. Ted Spears will remove, amend, and reuse the existing soil for the rain gardens.

Member Pamintuan inquired regarding the plant selection height requirements. Ted Spears explained that the highest elevation within the rain garden is approximately 12" inches. He emphasized maintaining safe sightlines while selecting plants effective at absorbing and retaining stormwater. Plants located near street corners remain under 36" inches, while taller species may be suitable within the banks and center areas of the rain garden. Member Pamintuan will email a list of potential plant species for consideration.

Commissioner Weber explained that village projects must be evaluated and prioritized both under current staffing numbers, and when the Village is fully staffed. The Village has one water trailer truck available and while watering can be provided, it may not be sufficient to meet all maintenance needs. Trustee Special added that the Village has expanded from maintaining a single watering location to approximately 15, significantly increasing the workload.

VOFP Utilities Commissioner Nick Weber confirmed the Tree Tree Preservation Commission Budget was approved in the amount of \$1000 Fiscal year 2026/ 2027. The village will assume expenses such as Speaker Fees, and printed Material. Event refreshment expenses to be deducted from the Tree budget.

1. Bee Presentation on October 10th. Member Pamintuan will design the flyer. The topic will be on winter sowing and seed collecting. Member Michael commended member Pamintuan on the design of 'save the date' seminar presentation flyer.

2. Member Michael reported the area south of the arboretum has buckthorn regrowth. She noted that Openlands had recommended a second herbicide treatment and additional removal work. She expressed concern the buckthorn is spreading into the arboretum. Trustee Special stated that maintenance activities at the arboretum may be funded through a different budget. Commissioner Weber suggested introducing the Commission to the Village's new Fire Department Chief to obtain permission for a buckthorn removal event. Member Michael contacted the Ecology Club sponsors at East Leyden and West Leyden High Schools; East Leyden expressed interest, and Openlands has not responded regarding a date for the follow-up workday.

3. Member Pamintuan listed the number of plants planted. 62 pint plants; 2 bushes, and measured the area for the number of Junipers needed for winter wind protection. Commissioner Weber stated that the planting site is located at a water pumping station and stressed that the Water Department must be informed whenever access to the site requires opening the gate.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SFFPD Smolen is compiling a listing of gardens throughout town for future communication. Commissioner Weber approved a \$150.00 speaker's fee check for Wings & Talons, and \$440 for plants from Possibility Place. At King street, a grassy section area was cleared by the Water

Department, then Soil and wood chips added. The project was cited as an example of effective teamwork among Village staff.

SFPD Smolen met with Mayor Pedersen regarding bat house installation, who expressed full support for the initiative. The project requires a utility pole for installation and coordinated placement of bat houses. SFPD will work with Morgan Fausett to determine the best location. The members discussed pursuing corporate sponsorships and grant opportunities to help fund the project.

The village is expected to have a great Fall tree planting. Trees Forever Grant approved an estimate from Steve Lane for \$5200, but we may expand the project or raise the no-match grant amount as needed.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Special commended the board's efforts at the back-to-school event; they were well received. Trustee Special inquired regarding the number of Tree Commission members needed. Chair Michael said the Commission was formed with 8 members, and is currently at 6. At 7 members, the quorum remains the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Member Michael asked the members for a motion adding Morgan Fausett to the Tree Commission.

1st ME Smolen

2nd Grahn

All in favor. Motion carried.

Member Michael presented the proposed Parkway Planting Pilot Program, first discussed at the previous meeting. The pilot would allow pollinator-friendly plantings under 36 inches in height at two residential parkway locations to evaluate feasibility and community interest. She noted that similar programs exist in Oak Park, Chicago, and Wilmette and include provisions limiting municipal liability. Commissioner Weber expressed support for the concept but emphasized that utility access must remain a priority. He stated that the Village should not be responsible for replacing plantings damaged or removed during utility work. Member Michael noted that participating homeowners would be required to sign a waiver acknowledging this condition.

Commissioner Weber recommended vetting applicants before approval, particularly where water mains or other underground infrastructure are present, to avoid future conflicts. He also stressed the need for clear guidelines distinguishing approved plantings from weeds and nuisance vegetation. Trustee Special raised concerns regarding program oversight and enforcement, noting that responsibilities must be clearly defined before the proposal is presented to the Village Board. Discussion followed regarding which department would be responsible for inspections and

complaints. Lisa stated that her inspectors would not be issuing citations related to the program. Andy offered to serve as a point of contact and indicated that he would work with property owners to address concerns before any enforcement action was considered. Member Pamintuan volunteered to assist with inspections if needed. Trustee Special noted that Oak Park occasionally uses an inspector to review parkway plantings village-wide. SFPD Smolen suggested limiting the pilot to 100 square feet per site to keep it manageable and asked whether potential participants had been identified. Member Michael suggested using the Village's social media platforms to solicit interest from residents. Member ME Smolen offered her parkway as a potential pilot location. Commissioner Weber stated that the location appeared suitable because it does not appear to contain utility conflicts.

The Commission also discussed planters, drainage concerns, fire hydrant clearances, and site maintenance requirements. Commissioner Weber recommended reviewing applications on a case-by-case basis and noted that plantings should be maintained at least four feet from fire hydrants. Member Michael suggested limiting the pilot to 10 homes once approved and evaluating the results before considering expansion. Member Pamintuan proposed recognizing outstanding pollinator gardens through an annual community award program.

The Commission discussed property transfers and winter maintenance practices. Member Michael noted that, in Oak Park, parkway gardens remain with the property and are typically left standing through the winter before being maintained in the spring. Member Michael stated that the Village currently has limited pollinator habitat and that the pilot program would provide a practical, incremental approach to expanding pollinator-friendly landscapes. She added that adoption of the program could position Franklin Park as a regional leader among neighboring communities, including Elmwood Park, Schiller Park, River Grove, Northlake, and Melrose Park.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:44 pm a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Member ME Smolen, seconded by Member Pamintuan:

Motion to Adjourn Roll Call:

Les Grahn

Ramona Michael

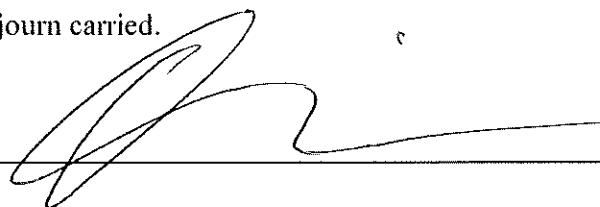
Violet Pamintuan

Mary Ellen Smolen

Motion to adjourn carried.

Approval

Signature:



Date:

9/23/26