

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TREE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON
TUESDAY, JUNE 16th, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Tree Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:02pm 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 6:02 pm

ROLL CALL

Tree Preservation Members: Les Grahn, Ramona Michael, 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 APRIL 21st, 2026

April 21st, 2026 minutes approved

1st ME Smolen

2nd Violet Pamintuan

BUSINESS

1. Openlands Project – April 25: Over 35 volunteers from the Rotary Club participated, including a few residents and Tree Commission members. A total of 65 trees were planted along Addison & Wolf.

Openlands / Treekeepers / Leyden HS Ecology Club – May 9: This joint event resulted in 20 trees planted.

Bee Board Library Outreach: The Bee Board's presentation was well attended.

During the Library Summer Kickoff event, over 160 free plants were distributed, and 11 residents signed up for trees.

Railroad Daze: More than 300 plants were given away, and 6 residents signed up for trees.

WMRA Signboard Project: The final signboard design for the West of Mannheim Residential Area (WMRA) was completed. Four copies were installed, featuring English/Spanish translation and the specific verbiage requested by Carl Hament (CRTI). D & R Printing produced the design using photos provided by the Tree Commission.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SFFPD Smolen reported a total of 20 trees were planted around North School and East Leyden High School. Ecology Club students and Openlands volunteers canvassed the neighborhood, knocking on residents doors to encourage sign up for tree planting. Tree Board members volunteered at the planting event. CRTI Partnership: CRTI donated 80 trees, continuing to be an excellent partner with Franklin Park. Additionally, the Village purchased 47 balled-and-burlap trees. Bee Shed: Shelving has been installed.

30% vinegar and Epsom salt will be purchased to be used as a natural weed control. Community Recognition: SFFPD Smolen read a letter to the Village Board praising the members of the Tree/Bee Board for their outstanding efforts.

Railroad Days Feedback: Attendees from Schaumburg, Glenview, and Bensenville expressed how impressed they were with the Tree/Bee Board's efforts.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Special commended the Board for their efforts and expressed how well-organized and impactful the Board's events are. Trustee Special noted the strong community response when an unhealthy 140-year-old tree was removed, noting the awareness regarding tree importance shown on the Franklin Park Facebook Community Connection page. The public's reaction—including comments about losing a historic treasure—demonstrates that the Tree Board's outreach is working and that residents' appreciation is growing. Attendance at Tree and Bee Board presentations continues to rise, reflecting a clear increase in community engagement.

OTHER BUSINESS

Member Michael discussed a Trees Forever's Illinois Community Canopy grant program (leftover funding from IRA). It funds tree planting projects that enhance the canopy in eligible Illinois communities, which Franklin Park qualifies. She proposed applying for the grant in order to 1. Purchasing and planting small trees such as dogwoods and Tupelo which CRTI does not always provide. Can be used as "Fillers or fill in blanks" where a large tree cannot be planted, and under wires. 2.Create a Heritage/Legacy Tree Program listing with definitions specific to the village and its trees and may be added to the Village Tree Ordinance post Village lawyer review and Trustees' vote. Member Michael emphasized the importance of adding formal definitions for "Heritage Trees" and "Legacy Trees" to the Village's tree ordinances to help address the ongoing issue of healthy, mature trees being removed—particularly when homes are sold and new owners cut down trees on their property. Establishing Heritage and Legacy Tree categories would add value, protection, and community pride. 3.If permitted under the grant, funding may be used for tree-tag labeling at the arboretum and for signage identifying tree species.

SFFPD Smolen will submit the grant application once tree estimates are received from the nurseries.

Motion going forward with the Grant:

Motion 1st Violet Pamintuan; 2nd ME Smolen. All in Favor.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Definitions of Heritage and Legacy Trees were discussed. A Heritage Tree is a mature, exceptionally valuable tree that merits special protection due to its age, size, species importance, or ecological significance. They represent the oldest or most ecologically important elements of the community's urban forest and offer environmental and cultural benefits that cannot be quickly replaced.

For example: A 1.5-inch caliper replacement tree will not match the ecosystem benefits of a 60-foot, 78-year-old *Tilia × europaea* for many decades. A 60 to 90 years growth is required before a replacement tree provides comparable value.

A Legacy Tree is formally designated for its long-term community value—often due to exceptional size, age, historical relevance, or ecological importance. Unlike Heritage Trees, which qualify automatically by

meeting objective criteria, Legacy Trees are typically nominated and officially recognized, giving them the highest level of municipal protection. Legacy Trees do not need to be native species. Further discussion to be continued.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Tree Board welcomed resident Morgan Fausett, a frequent attendee to Tree/Bee events, who remarked that she greatly enjoyed the meeting, learned a great deal, and intends to attend future sessions.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:28 pm a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Smolen.

Motion to Adjourn Roll Call:

Les Grahn

Ramona Michael

Katarina Modrich

Violet Pamintuan

Mary Ellen Smolen

Approval

Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'M. Smolen', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

7/22/26

