

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TREE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON
TUESDAY, JULY 21st, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Tree Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:00pm 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

ROLL CALL

Tree Preservation Members: Les Grahn, Ramona Michael, Katarina Modrich

Bee Committee members: Mary Ellen Smolen, Monika Surovych, Violet Pamintuan

Present: Trustee Karen Special, SFFPD Andrew Smolen

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, JUNE 16th, 2026

June 16th, 2026 minutes approved

1st Katarina Modrich

2nd Ramona Michael

BUSINESS

1. Member Michael stated that the Village does not qualify for additional trees under the Trees Forever's Illinois Community Canopy Grant Program. The funding is through the IRA grant program, and the Village has already received funding for the WMRA location West of Mannheim/ East of Grand Avenue. She also noted that the grant cannot be used for signage. She reported that the Village does qualify for canvassing Village-owned trees to document size, species, and age for potential designation as Heritage or Legacy Trees, which may be proposed for inclusion in updated tree inventory and VOFP Tree Ordinance revision and additions through the grant.
2. The Fall Bee Library Presentation Event is scheduled for October 10 at 11:00 AM, confirmed with Amelia Tulod. The event flyer is due by late August or early September.
3. Four presenters for the October 17 Tree Preservation Seminar are confirmed:
 - Claudia Morrison
Conservation & Experiential Programming, Forest Preserves of Cook County
 - Kay Bordenave
Wings and Talons
Raptor Education, Stewardship, and Conservation
 - Adam Schwartz
Engagement Coordinator, The Compost Club
 - Paul Filary
Director of Operations for Kramer Tree Specialists and the Commercial Director for the Illinois Arborist Association.
4. Member Surovych reported the three beehives are getting stronger; one was lost earlier in the season. Her focus is on establishing strong hives capable of surviving seasonal conditions rather

than solely honey production. She suggested drought tolerant Juniper trees planted near the hives to provide wind protection during winter and early spring. SFPFD Smolen to purchase 30% vinegar and Epsom salt to be applied as natural weed killer around the hives.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SFPFD Smolen reported speaking with Connie Cowan from Trees Forever's Illinois Community Canopy Grant Program regarding a potential grant of up to \$30,000 to update the Village's tree inventory. He noted that Franklin Park has lost a significant number of trees and planted others, and that a full inventory review would allow for identification of potential Heritage and Legacy Trees. Private residences can be visually assessed from accessible areas and qualifying Heritage or Legacy trees identified. SFPFD Smolen explained that the Village would need to adopt an ordinance establishing a process to notify residents that their property may contain a Heritage Tree designation and to request permission to formally register it. If the resident agrees, staff would then be able to enter the backyard to measure and document the tree. SFPFD Smolen noted that this process would provide greater protection for existing mature trees within the Village.

The Beehives: A crew cleared and readied the existing beehive area for planting. 8 inches of soil and 4 inches of wood chips will be added. Member Pamintuan donated plants for the garden. She stated she is designing the garden with taller plants in the center and shorter plants in front, focusing on small-flower native species preferred by bees. Fencing will be needed to protect them from rabbits.

SFPFD Smolen identified a potential location for a rain garden at the King Street facility, positioned in front of the building. Member Pamintuan mentioned that Conservation@Home offers a grant program that provides funding for rain-garden design if participants attend their classes and an in-person event.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Special met with Member ME Smolen to discuss the Village's recent Bee City U.S.A. re-certification. Trustee Special stated that the Village needs additional examples of how Bee City U.S.A. initiatives are being promoted throughout the community.

She noted that four additional raised beds can be added near the community garden, and that planting selections in those beds can be aligned with Bee City U.S.A. requirements to strengthen the Village's certification for the next renewal cycle. Trustee Special also reported that Grand Avenue may include rain gardens as part of future improvements, though the final list of locations has not yet been released.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Member Michael thanked Member Pamintuan for compiling an extensive list of perennials and annuals under 36 inches for the Parkway Planting proposal. Members discussed plant and tree species, including the linden tree, as beneficial to a variety of pollinators.

A packet regarding the proposed Parkway Planting Pilot Program was emailed to all members. The forms serve as template guidance and are not final. Member Michael noted that the language reflects what is typically used in other municipalities and that she reviewed Chicago's program as a reference while preparing materials for the Village. Final adoption will require Village review and possible revisions. Members may choose to vote to submit the forms as a working template for Village discussion and modification. Member Michael stated that enforcement, monitoring, and complaint procedures can be modeled after municipalities with established parkway planting programs. She emphasized that the

Village should review the proposal due to its 1 year monitored pilot-program nature. Member Michael requested a vote at this meeting, acknowledging that a second vote will likely be required after the Village completes their review if accepted.

Trustee Special and Member Michael discussed allowable plant lists. Trustee Special stated that Village staff will not be responsible for maintaining planted parkways, and utility companies (ComEd and others) will not be responsible for replanting areas disturbed during utility work.

Members may reference programs in Oak Park, Lincolnwood, Northbrook, Arlington Heights, and Mount Prospect for guidance. If a resident plants species not on the approved list, Code Enforcement would issue a citation. Questions that arose for future clarification:

- How to address residents who plant “weeds.”
- Who will identify invasive species?
- Whether the Village could hire part-time forestry support
- How plantings are handled when a property is sold.
- How to address residents who prefer shrubs or benches instead of pollinator plants.

Member Michael asked the Tree Commission members whether they agreed to move forward with requesting that the Village review and consider the creation of a Parkway Pilot Program.

A motion to proceed with the proposed Parkway Pilot Program parameters was presented and met with unanimous approval.

Motion: To move forward with the Parkway Pilot Program parameters.

1st: Monika

2nd: Katarina

All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Resident Fausett presented a proposal to install bat boxes in Franklin Park. She outlined the ecological benefits of bat boxes and noted that grant funding may be available for installation and ongoing maintenance. She stated that bats are present in Illinois only seasonally, and providing appropriate roosting boxes would help support their continued presence in the community and as effective mosquito control.

SFFPD Smolen recommended Williams Reservoir as a suitable location for the installation of bat boxes. It was noted that black bat boxes are not recommended, as they can absorb excessive heat and cause bats to overheat. This initiative would be new to Franklin Park if approved, and resident education regarding the benefits of bats and the purpose of bat boxes will be needed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:39 pm a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Member Grahn, seconded by Member Pamintuan

Les Grahn

Ramona Michael

Katarina Modrich

Violet Pamintuan

Mary Ellen Smolen

Monika Surovych

Approval
Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Date: August 18/2026

A small, handwritten mark resembling a stylized 'M' or a wavy line.