

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TREE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON
OCTOBER 21st, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Tree Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:04 pm 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:

Joan Ambo

Les Grahm

Ramona Michael

Violet Pamintuan

Bee Committee members:

Mary Ellen Smolen

Absent: Monika Suryovich

Also Present: SFFPD Andy Smolen

Absent Trustee Karen Special

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16th, 2025, MEETING MINUTES
September 16th, 2025 meeting minutes approved

BUSINESS

1. Seminar Takeaways and Future Ideas

The Village formally accepted and completed the donation to Wings and Talons. Members agreed the seminar was well executed, and four presenters proved to be an ideal number. Wings and Talons delivered an impressive live bird demonstration; however, the presentation was hampered by microphone malfunction.

The board discussed the possibility of inviting neighboring municipalities to future seminars to encourage pesticide reduction in their communities. Trustee Special noted that Franklin Park remains one of the few local communities not currently spraying for mosquitoes.

In preparation for Earth Day, the board considered approaching nurseries for small donations such as pots, and reaching out to local businesses like Goal Line and Finch for gift card contributions. The idea of inviting a pesticide expert to speak on the ecological risks of chemical use was proposed.

To increase attendance, members emphasized the importance of offering giveaways—free items tend to draw larger crowds. Networking with Triton College was identified as a valuable opportunity, especially in conjunction with utilizing the new plaza. Hosting events at the Arboretum was also suggested.

It was agreed that Tree Board events should be held only in Franklin Park to ensure they remain under the purview of the Tree and Bee Boards, and the village.

2. November 22 Library Presentation: The upcoming library presentation is scheduled for Saturday, November 22, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. Member Ambo shared the promotional flyer. All are encouraged to continue sharing the flyer to help boost attendance.

3. Fall Brown Bag Series was canceled due to unfavorable weather conditions. The board discussed the importance of having a contingency plan for future outdoor events. Suggestions included using a canopy, relocating under the gazebo, or utilizing the garage space in case of inclement weather.

4. SFFPD Smolen shared that bee colonies are thriving. Beekeeper and member Suryovich raised concerns about the brightness of nearby streetlights, which may disturb the bees. The board identified several potential solutions, including applying dimming film to the lights, installing shades, or exploring motion-activated lighting options.

Member Michael and SFFPD Smolen attended Chicago O'Hare Rotary Club Meeting. SFFPD Smolen presented Franklin Park's pollinator initiatives to the O'Hare Rotary Club. The Rotary Club will be donating \$300 to support the health and maintenance of the bees.

5. Regional Outreach on Pesticide Awareness: Trustee Special emphasized the importance of sharing Franklin Park's no-spray message with neighboring communities. While full adoption may not be immediate, disseminating the information is a critical step toward regional awareness. Many towns value butterflies, and this shared interest may help open conversations about the broader ecological impact of pesticide use—particularly on bees, butterflies, and fireflies.

To further public engagement, the board discussed organizing a presentation in partnership with the pet shop near Jewel to highlight the dangers of pesticides. Inviting an animal rescue organization to future events was also proposed as a way to attract and educate a wider audience.

6. Bee Board Appointment: Member Michael moved to appoint member Pamintuan to the Bee Board. All voted in favor.

7. Sam Jacobs (Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, Illinois Extension, UIUC), instrumental in securing last year's Master Naturalist presenter, expressed interest in coordinating additional presentations at the library. He remains a valuable resource and is willing to help identify and connect us with future speakers.

8. The Village has granted full permission for the buckthorn removal event scheduled for November 15th. Joe Montana will provide a waiver for participating students. A Franklin Park Fire Department engine will be present. Loppers and gloves will be provided. Ecologist Samantha Chavez from Openlands will lead the event and apply the herbicide to the stumps, as no non-chemical alternatives are currently available.

Todd Veltman, a teacher at West Leyden, communicated that students from East and West Leyden High Schools have expressed interest in participating. Benjamin Kadlec from Triton College will bring additional student volunteers. Samantha Chavez is coordinating with Openlands' legal team to finalize waiver documentation if needed.

Trustee Special noted that the Fire Chief requires clarification regarding the department's role. Openlands will initiate the controlled burn using a torch, with buckthorn placed directly on the grassy area. Member Michael drafted a letter to inform residents, which will also be posted at the police station. Nick Weber, Deputy Utilities Commissioner, and Fire Department Chief Mark Stewart both approved the event. If wind conditions are extreme, Openlands will postpone the burn. Participants will gain valuable experience in identifying buckthorn, which becomes increasingly difficult to eradicate once established. This marks the first time Franklin Park has hosted such an event on Village property—other municipalities typically conduct removals only in forest preserves. This initiative has sparked unprecedented interest from West Leyden, and we expect student volunteers at the event. SFFPD's Smolen commended the members for leading this effort. The board emphasized the importance of promoting the event and educating the public about buckthorn's invasive nature. This is a vital initiative, and many residents are still unaware of the ecological threat posed by buckthorn, and rarely recognized in backyards.

OTHER BUSINESS

N/A

PUBLIC COMMENT

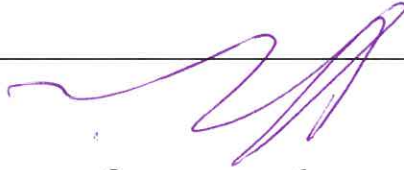
N/A

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:44 pm a motion to adjourn the meeting was made.

APPROVAL

SIGNATURE: _____



DATE: _____

11/19/25

