

# Shade Tree and Beautification Commission Minutes Commission Meeting

February 24, 2026



## VIDEO BROADCASTING & RECORDING

Meeting videos are broadcast live and published on YouTube.com  
<https://www.youtube.com/@cityofmountvernon3369/streams>

## CALL TO ORDER

Present	Absent	Excused
Fourth Ward LeNan Hager Sarah Wagner James Brown Emil Diener	Safety Service Director Tanner Salyers Engineer Brian Ball Jon May	Russ Mentzer

Quentin Platt, Assistant City Engineer  
Zane Mikesell- City Forester  
Randy Pursel  
Rachel Wilson  
Brian Wade  
Kelsey Siekkinen

## MINUTES APPROVAL

Ms. Wagner moved to approve the January 2026 Minutes. Mr. Diener second the motion. AIF motion approved.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Brown said that he gave the members a breakdown of the funding the Shade Tree Commission will be getting from the City and from grants.

## OLD BUSINESS

TCP

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Wade if he was able to plant any trees with all the snow from the past month. Mr. Wade said that he was not able to get anything planted with all the snow. Mr. Brown said the citizens of the community are expecting their TCP trees and Mr. Wade is going to make them his first priority when he is able to start planting them again.

West End

Mr. Brown said that Mr. Diener is working on the West End and he expects to be done in April.

Clintonville

Mr. Brown said that Mr. Wade and himself will be walking these sites on 2/27/2026 to put flags

out.

### Invasive Removal

Mr. Mikesell said that last year, the Shade Tree Commission officially voted to commit to removing invasive species in the City of Mount Vernon. Last year, the Shade Tree Commission was able to remove 70 Bradford pears in the community, and the Commission has the same goal for 2026. Mr. Mikesell said that he will start identifying new trees to remove and replace this year. Mr. Mikesell said that the City is doing some work around the Kokosing River in the Riparian Corridor. It is pretty invaded with invasive species. There are three areas of focus right now. The first area of focus is north of the Harcourt Road Bridge on both the east and west side. The focus will be on the honeysuckle, autumn olive and other invasive species. These removals will also be treated in hopes of lessening the amount of invasive species that will come back. The second area of focus is north of the Memorial and Harmony Park on the north side of the bank along Mac Industries. This work will be starting very soon. The third area of focus is Martinsburg Road as part of the Safe Routes to School Program. The project will extend the sidewalk from South Division Street up to MVNU property on Ames St. Part of the proposed sidewalk will go through where some trees are. Most of the trees are damaged, aged or in decay. It will be a good time to remove and replace those trees with the new sidewalk. There are 17 trees that will need to be removed for this project. Last year, the Shade Tree Commission walked that site and made the recommendations for those removals and they are currently under contract to be removed.

### Ariel Foundation Park Meadows

### YMCA

Mr. Brown said the Career Center is intending to put in tree pits. There will be 9 of them total on Chestnut St. and Mulberry St. Mr. Brown said that as soon as he gets the material list, they can start working on that project.

### Cougar Dr

Mr. Brown said that there is room there for 10 more trees on the south side of the west soccer field between Cougar Dr. and Yellow Jacket Dr. before the CH4 Stadium.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### America 250

Ms. Hager wasn't able to go to the America 250 meeting. She talked to Alivia and she said she was aware of the trees that were planted there.

### Experience Mount Vernon

Ms. Hager said the Knox County Master Gardeners met with the Experience Mount Vernon committee. They talked about planting flowers, plants and hostas that will bloom in the spring and carry over into the fall. They are not going to be interfering with any of the trees.

### Martinsburg Rd

Mr. Brown said that there will be a Safe Route to School Sidewalk project going on this year, so there will need to be some trees removed for this project.

## **OTHER**

Mr. Brown said that Safety Service Director Tanner Salyers and City Engineer Brian Ball are voting members of the Shade Tree Commission. However, due to their schedule, it is very hard for them to make it to the meetings. Mr. Brown said that he would be able to go through the City Ordinances for the Shade Tree Commission and present City Council with a modification that would state that the Safety Service Director and the City Engineer would be able to appoint another person to take their place. It would more than likely be the Assistant Engineer Quentin Platt and City Forester Zane Mikesell. Mr. Platt said that once something is written up for this, then the Shade Tree Commission could vote to recommend the modification to the City Council.

Ms. Siekkinen is a certified arborist. She has a startup nonprofit botanical garden in Palmroy, Ohio. She used to work for the Forest Service in Cherokee, North Carolina. She earned her TRAQ (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification) certification. She then relocated to Santa Cruz, California, where she inspected trees for a utility company. She is now working as a consulting utility forester for American Electric Power. She works primarily with new builds. She has a passion for gardens, and she recently joined the Franklin Park Conservatory Women's Board. She is working on her Knox County Master Gardener Certification. She would like to become a member of the Shade Tree Commission once she becomes a resident of Mount Vernon.

Mr. Brown has a preliminary design of the arch that goes between the Rotary Playground and the Splashpad. The sign will say "Rotary Club MTV" and it will have rotary symbols on each side. The rotary club donated \$500 toward the sign.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Diener made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Wagner seconded the motion. AIF meeting adjourned.