

HARRODSBURG TREE BOARD MINUTES

08/17/2026

Present: Sarah Shewmaker, Ruth Webb, Suni Ashton, Laura Baird, Allen Bush and Patrick Smith.

Jessica Bessin was unable to attend this month's meeting due to State Fair preparations.

5:06 p.m. - Meeting called to order

08/03/26 special meeting and 07/13/26 meeting minutes: Motion to approve by Sarah Shewmaker and seconded by Laura Baird. Motion passed. Ruth Webb noted that the August 3 minutes should record adjournment at 5:45 p.m., list the next meeting as August 17, and reflect the Pioneer Days discussion.

July 2026 Financial Report: Motion to approve by Ruth Webb and seconded by Allen Bush. Motion passed.

Round Robin

Suni: The account sits at \$3,961.50. A \$500 check has been written to the Mercer County Extension Office reimbursing Jessica for the tent and table supplies, but has not yet been turned in, which would leave \$3,461. Her actual costs were roughly \$676, and she has since indicated she is comfortable with approximately \$405, so the check will be voided and rewritten. The \$2,000 tourism contribution has been deposited. We are still waiting on approximately \$3,000 from the City — I have contacted City Clerk Shavonna Huffman twice with no update. Jessica still needs to provide the invoice for her pesticide license study materials.

Ruth: Friends of Anderson Dean Park received a \$14,000 grant to replace the two deteriorated gazebos along the walking path. The old structures are down and the new Kentucky Barns structures are in place.

Allen: The library room is reserved for the October 13 program, and the board has been notified by email.

Laura: Approximately 25 volunteer contacts have been consolidated into a single spreadsheet. The Board agreed to send an initial volunteer notice about one month before Tree Week, targeting September 12, with a follow-up one week before events. The full Tree Week schedule will be included so volunteers can choose among opportunities. Former and inactive board members, including Doug, should be added to the list.

Sarah: The trees at Big Spring have been mapped using GPS data, with the goal of turning the inventory into a public tree identification map reachable by QR code. Patrick Smith and I will work on the technical approach, with Avenza Maps as a fallback, aiming to demonstrate it during the Big Spring tree walk. I will also table at the September 8 UK Extension Open House, 5:00–7:00 p.m., and encourage other members to attend. Allen Bush noted the indoor format may allow him to assist. I will also begin pricing ginkgos over the next week or two.

Grant Updates

The Board voted unanimously to move forward with Friends of Anderson Dean Park on the KAEE grant for a Spring 2027 planting project. Sarah Shewmaker will work with Joanna on the application, due Friday, August 21, 2026. The Board discussed applying for the full \$5,000 again. Because the KAEE grant is reimbursement-based, the Board would need to front the cost while simultaneously spending \$2,000 to match the LGE/KU grant in the same planting season. Approximately \$3,000 in expected City funding would help cover the gap.

Spring Hill Cemetery is identified in the Community Forestry Plan as a planting location, but previous plantings were damaged by weed eaters. Sarah will work with the cemetery caretaker this fall to set maintenance expectations, using stakes, mulch and temporary tree protection. Allen Bush recommended a small test planting there to evaluate maintenance before committing, with the remainder planted at Anderson Dean Park.

New Board Chair

Ruth Webb agreed to serve as chair for approximately six months. Seconded by Sarah Shewmaker. Motion passed unanimously. Ruth expects to roll off the Board in March 2027, at which time leadership will need to be revisited.

Harrodsburg Tree Week

Sarah attended a Lexington Tree Week planning meeting and connected with the statewide Urban Forest Initiative (UFI) team. A UFI Zoom meeting is set for Wednesday, August 19 to finalize coordination. Tentative schedule:

- October 10 — Tree Week kickoff at Veterans Park, proclamation and a small planting of one tree and two shrubs, tentatively 10:00 a.m.
- October 13 — Library program at 6:30 p.m., Mike Hayman presenting “Trees for Urban Sites.” Promotion should emphasize the topic rather than the speaker’s name.
- October 14 — “How to Kill a Tree” training by Sarah and Jessica, tentatively morning, for the general public, City and County employees, parks staff and cemetery employees.
- October 15 — Big Spring tree walk and volunteer work session, tentatively 5:00 p.m.: mulching the 2024 plantings, tree identification and possible light pruning.
- October 17 — Ginkgo planting at Anderson Dean Park, tentatively 10:00 a.m.

Sarah will also explore a tree-themed trivia night and proposed inviting local congregations to incorporate environmental stewardship into services during Tree Week. Ruth will look into an interfaith contact network and identified Joe Cutler as a possible resource.

Proclamation and City Commission

The Board is on the City Commission agenda for Monday, August 24. Ruth will present; Sarah expects to be unable to attend. Shavonna Huffman requested a copy of the proclamation so the Mayor’s signature can be arranged. The existing template is dated 2024 and emphasizes the City’s partnership with UFI without identifying the Tree Board. Sarah will add the Tree Board logo; Ruth will update the dates and add Tree Board language, and will bring approximately 15 printed copies of the proclamation and the Tree Week flyer rather than relying on City staff to copy them. Sarah will also revise the flyer to correct the Anderson Dean spelling on the October 17 item and emphasize “Trees for Urban Sites” on October 13. UFI artwork can be repurposed into individual event flyers.

Other Business

Patrick Smith is proposed to replace Doug Miell following Doug’s resignation, with the remaining term running through approximately Spring 2028. The appointment is expected to go before the City Commission on August 24. Patrick will send a short professional bio to Sarah and Ruth, and Ruth will condense it to one paragraph.

Pioneer Days Review: Feedback on the booth was strongly positive, particularly the tent and tablecloth purchased by Jessica, the leaf rubbing activities and the children’s and adult handouts. Visitors asked about tree identification, what and where to plant and general tree care, reinforcing the value of a future website or digital information resource. Sarah reported roughly eight substantial conversations over two days, with heat suppressing attendance. Ruth recruited volunteers and noted the Board has planted approximately 254 trees since 2020. Future booths should include sharpened pencils or sharpeners.

Jazz Fest is tentatively October 3–4, and Sarah is unavailable October 3. Rather than a full booth, the Board will coordinate with Jill Cutler on promoting a tree walk. Sarah will contact Jill regarding the existing request for a tree identification map. The Board decided against tabling at Oktoberfest, as the format does not lend itself to educational conversation.

5:46 p.m. - Meeting adjourned

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m.