

COOL CITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 15th, 2025

Goldstein called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. The following members were present and answered roll call: Martin, Goldstein, Collins.

Also Present: Senior Planner, Caitlin Rice, Noah Canada (Resident & Master Garden)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Martin made a motion to approve August 18th, 2025, meeting minutes. Seconded by Goldstein.

Voice Vote: 2 ayes, 1 abstain (Collins), Motion approved, (2-0)

Lisa Brennans arrives to the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

DISCUSSION

Fall Program:

- Rice presents a few options of the Leave the Leaves sign and Committee members font on desired format. Leave the Leaves signs will be ordered and raffled out to residents over the next few weeks.

Francie Collins is introduced as a new member of the Cool Cities meeting. Collins is a lifelong residence who has a background in education, is passionate about sustainability and avid volunteer in the community.

Upcoming Events:

- Adopt a Highway Clean up – October 11th 9 am – meet at Rural King parking lot.
- Fall Festival – Saturday October 25th – 10am-3pm tabling. Scheduling will be discussed more in depth at the October 20th meeting.
- Willoughby Farm Fall Day is not planned for the Committee this year, but the group will add it as an option next year.

Budget:

- Signage program for Low Mow Spring and Leave the Leaves
- T-Shirts for members
- Misc \$1,000 budget for events, Green Business Challenge, tabling expenses.
- UCM Air Pollution Monitors are \$6,000 each. Currently the City will not be budgeting for it at this time. Martin suggests monitoring grant opportunities.
- Daffodils project along Interstate & Cool Cities adopted highways.
 - Project discussed with City Manager and Community Development Director. Location is in IDOT right-of-way. Great opportunity for corridor enhancement but is multi-jurisdictional with Admin, Public Works, Parks and IDOT. Will not be budgeted for Cool Cities scope but will continue to be explored.

Collins mentions property maintenance issues in alleys and residences with open trash cans that can cause standing water and nuisance. Martin mentions Republic Services may have a program similar to recycling reminders to provide residents to close lids as water damages paper materials for recycling.

Martin requests an update on New Earth Farm composting registration numbers and diversion rates and recommends a social media post to reinvigorate public interest.

Rice provides an update about the St. Louis Road project. The Committee requested more information about stormwater management and landscaping considerations. The project was focused on pedestrian access, safety and slowing down traffic. Landscaping was added in some bump outs for aesthetics and plantings into the new parking area to reduce runoff. All stormwater in this area runs to a regional stormwater detention basin near Jefferson School and this area was designated in the Great Streets Plan to not be a concern for flooding risks.

Martin asks for an update on the Uptown Tree Planting and feedback from Uptown Business owners. Minimal comments with some questions about blocking signage. Planting date is discussed and determined to be November 8th. Looking at

about 60 trees to be planted in Uptown. Rice pulls up the tree planting map and discusses the tree species and locations. Trees are planted along the street in areas with sufficient tree lawns and not under power lines. The grant and City's tree management plan focuses on diversity to build resiliency to pests, disease and disasters. Most trees are native. Nonnative species are proposed in the tree grates due to the tough conditions that only certain species can withstand. Committee encourages education materials to the public and Uptown businesses to help communicate the importance of trees in our community.

Collins inquires about future plans for the Columbian School site after demolition. Rice updates that there are currently no plans but will continue to be discussed.

Fall Festival games discussed are the recycling wheel, compost wheel, compost worms, and fall themed table game. Brennan will be out of town for Fall Festival.

Committee discusses other opportunities to connect with the community including sustainable craft nights and partnerships with local businesses such as Quinton's Craft house.

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

Noah Canada, a Master Gardener, Tree Steward from Heartlands program and resident of Collinsville. Mr. Canada expressed excitement for the Uptown Tree Planting and appreciates the consideration for species diversity.

Mr. Canada discussed the MODOT planting along I-64 with native plantings with glade species that are tolerant of drought and compacted soil and supporting wildlife is a great project that would be great to see in Collinsville.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Fall Festival Tabling

Tree Planting Grant Update

New Earth Farms Update & Promotion

Motion to adjourn made by Brennan and seconded by Goldstein.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Approved (4-0) ADJOURNMENT at 7:06 pm.