

# SPRUCE UP AUSTIN, INC.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2016

329 NORTH MAIN STREET SUITE 102 AUSTIN MN 55912

[www.spruceupaustin.org](http://www.spruceupaustin.org)



### Officers and Board Members for 2016 with years of service

**President** - Chris Stepp (6)

**Vice President** – Bill Hines McLain (6)

**Treasurer** – Kathy Borland (14)

**Secretary** – Greta Anderson (4)

Ruth Arons (2)

Kris Baldus (2)

Jan Chuick (17)

John Duren (2)

Kelly Lady (15)

Ernie Hamero (2)

Deb Mickelsen (3)

Harlan Nelson (11)

Howard Nepp (12)

Gretchen Ramlo (21)

Mike Ruzek (27)

Sarah Shaw (2)

Kim Underwood (9)

Renee Wangen (4)

Ex-officio Members

Lee Bonorden, Bonnie Mogen, Jack Sherman, Julie Thomsen, Bonnie Rietz

# **SPRUCE UP AUSTIN 2016**

## **Mission Statement**

Spruce Up Austin, Inc. is established for the purpose of coordinating various resources to initiate, establish and maintain beautification projects in the Austin area with a strong emphasis on planting tree. Spruce Up Austin, Inc. will use these projects to promote at greater environment awareness within the Austin community, to encourage citizens to improve their property and to enhance a positive image for the City of Austin. Spruce Up Austin, Inc. will also participate in various activities that will educate the Austin community on plants and landscape concepts.

Spruce Up Austin completed its 27<sup>th</sup> year in 2016 and we look forward to continuing the efforts to enhance the landscape of our community. A dedicated board, terrific support by other volunteers, an excellent working relationship with businesses and the Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department continue as strengths of Spruce Up Austin.

Spruce Up Austin was directly involved in projects where more than \$7,951 was spent in 2016. When the volunteer time associated with these projects is taken into account, the internal work of the Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department, the value to the community amounted to more than \$13,921. During the twenty-seven-year history of our organization, the total value to our community exceeds \$515,006. Twenty-four trees and spruce were planted during 2016 bringing the twenty-seven-year tree total to 2,713. In late 2016 the Board approved to establish an Endowment Fund. You will hear more about the benefits and how to contribute soon.

## **Public Relations and Education**

**Yard of the Month:** 2016 marked the 14<sup>th</sup> year for celebrating the yard of the month. Our committee is always looking to honor those front yards with curb appeal! The winners of the 2016 Yard of the Month were:

- June - Oliver and Sharlene Hagen, 703 4th St SW
- July - Mike and Shelly Compton, 704 Oakland Ave W
- August - Gina Bauer, 2000 13th St SW
- September - Lori Tigner, 611 5th Ave SW

**Yard and Garden Tour:** Our annual fundraising event was Saturday, July 16. Once a year participants get the privilege to stroll along the chosen private gardens soaking in new ideas to utilize in their own gardens but we also have a special at each location. The revenue generated from this fundraising event is used for SUA projects. The 2016 gardens were:

- Christina and Scott Greenman      1804 2nd Ave NW
  - Featured impressive yard art for sale; outdoor pillows, butterflies & giant spatula!
- James and Jeanne Sheehan      2503 7th Ave SW
  - John Duren was on hand selling & signing his new book *The Essence of Place: The Story of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center*.
- Lonnie and Bev Skalicky      602 22nd St NW
  - Soothing music by Scott Jasmin while you toured the garden.

- Dick and Leanne Poshusta                      1508 6th Ave NE
- Handmade goat milk soap by LOSA, Austin’s sustainability farm – [www.losaacres.weebly.com](http://www.losaacres.weebly.com)
  
- Hormel Historic Home                              208 4th Ave NW
- The Austin Art Center was on site with information about their classes, events and featured artists.

## **Projects**

### **I. Friday, April 29:**

Spruce Up Austin in partnership with Modern Woodmen Fraternal celebrates Arbor Day in Minnesota on Friday, April 29, 2016 by planting three trees at the Hormel Historic Home. These trees are in honor of George A. Hormel, his wife Lillian and his son Jay. This year marks the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hormel Foods Corporation. Volunteers also did considerable mulching throughout the Hormel Historic Home garden. The day concluded by planting three spruce trees on the Northeast corner of Wescott Sports Complex. Total cost of the trees was \$996.00 with cost sharing by SUA and Modern Woodman. Volunteer support by both organizations considering the actual cost and the considerable effort of labor brings the value to the community to be estimated at \$2,369.00.

### **II. Saturday, July 30:**

The landscaping was finished around “Buffy the Cow” at the Mower County Fair Grounds. SUA took the leadership role in the planning and funding of the project. SUA applied for grant funding from Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services and made a presentation to the Fair Board. Seventeen adults and two children turned out to lace 28 plants and spread about 6 yards of rock. The volunteers consisted on nine Spruce Up members, spouses, and friends who wanted to help. The project was finished just in time for a nice rain to give the new plants a good drink. The total cost was \$1,873.00 with SUA contributing \$973.00 plus labor. Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services granted \$500.00 and the Mower County Fair Board gave \$400.00. Considering Berg’s Nursery discounts and the volunteer labor the estimated value to the community is \$3,300.00. Special thanks to Ken Trom, who years ago, had proposed a landscaping plan around “Buffy”. SUA is pleased that this could become a reality on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Buffy the Cow” created by Stan Ankeny! The Ankeny family and Fox Electric teamed up to provide lighting for “Buffy” and the landscaping which reemphasized the importance of agriculture in this area.

### **III. October 18:**

Ten large Swamp White Oaks were planted just south of the Hormel Foods Corporate office. The Company celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Spruce Up Austin decided to plant trees honoring each of the presidents that have served since 1891. The current President Jim Snee and the previous President Jeff Ettinger were able to cut the ribbon for this project. The Chamber Ambassadors were present as well as SUA Board members, their Spouses and other Volunteers. Park and Recreation augured the holes and eventually staked the trees. Volunteers planted the trees, placed the pre-cut landscape fabric around each tree and added a good layer of mulch. The total cost to SUA was \$3,65.00 and value to the community of \$4,748.00.

### **IV. September:**

There were significant improvements to the Tree Trek. The primary purpose is to hopefully reduce the need for maintenance but also to make it look nice throughout the growing season. Each new tree now has a pre-cut 5-foot diameter piece of landscape fabric anchored down and with western

red cedar mulch added when needed. A University of Minnesota Representative spent time in Austin going over maintenance issues and brought a Tulip Tree, which was planted. The Tree Trek is a signature project of SUA which means it will have a high priority for maintenance. Total cost was \$957.00 but value to the community is estimated at \$1,914.00.

## **Resource Development**

The main objective of resource development is the Honorary Tree program. Honorary trees can be planted for many reasons, memory of a loved one, birth of a child, special anniversary or recognition of service. In 2016 there were eight (8) honorary trees planted and one (1) replacement tree planted. Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department plants the honorary trees in the fall of each year. See the list below for those honored in 2016.

We would also like to thank our 2016 financial supporters, Austin Utilities, Hormel Foundation, Honorary Tree donors, Modern Woodman, Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services and the Mower County Fair Board. Projects or events would not happen without the volunteers that donate their time, to you we are grateful!

There will be a special memorial planting project in 2017 donated by the Snater Family. The planting will incorporate a statue using funds from the Lydia Lien estate given to the Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department. The planting project will be located along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE near Rotary Park.

<b>2016 Spruce up Austin Honorary Program</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Tree</b>	<b>Placement</b>	<b>Tree Sponsor</b>
Al Cunningham	Autumn Blaze Maple	Eastside Lake	Kelly Mithuen
Hope Jahren	Swamp White Oak	Austin Public Library	Austin Public Library
Alex D. Tapp	Northern Catalpa & Hot Wings Maple	Todd Park	Sheryl Weinan-Yee
Ann Pickering	Autumn Blaze Maple	J.C. Hormel Nature Center	Jeff Baldus Family
Father Donald Zenk	Northern Pin Oak	Lions Bike shelter	Austin Noon Lions
The Hormel Foundation	Tulip Tree	Eastside Lake Tree Trek	Mike Ruzek
Ory Ann Helene Champlin	Northern Pin Oak	J.C. Hormel Nature Center	Nature Center Feast Committee
Gretchen Wangen	Baby Blue Eyes Spruce	Honor Guard Park	Wangen Family

## **Maintenance**

2016 was another busy year for all six of our maintenance groups. They continued to weed, prune and mulch their areas. This year Spruce Up adopted the Eastside Lake area to clean up and take care of the waterway as well in a partnership with the Vision 2020 Waterways Committee. Going forward into 2017 we will add a Spring and a Fall maintenance project at our Tree Trek. These two projects will involve our entire Board. Here's to 2017!

## **Nominating Committee**

The success of SUA is attributed to dedicated long term board members. This year we lost two long term board members, Howard Nepp (since 2004) and Harlan Nelson (since 2005). They are leaving the SUA board along with Bill McLain and Sarah Shaw. We thank them for all that they have done to improve the landscape of our community.

The new SUA board members for 2017-2018 are Mat Miller, Holly Wallace, Coulter Wood, and Steve Kime.

New officers for 2017-2018 are President Kim Underwood, Vice-President Kathy Borland, Secretary Greta Anderson, and Treasurer Gretchen Ramlo. The leadership of these and past officers is appreciated.

Ex-officio board members that will continue are Lee Bonorden, Bonnie Mogen and Jack Sherman. Bonnie Rietz and Julie Thomsen are replaced by Howard Nepp and Harlan Nelson. All of these volunteers have served on the SUA board at one time and have continued to be friends of the SUA mission. Their contribution to the success of SUA is appreciated.

