

SPRUCE UP AUSTIN, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

500 4th Avenue NE, AUSTIN MN 55912

www.spruceupaustin.org



Officers and Board Members for 2017 with years of service

President - Kim Underwood (10)

Vice President – Kathy Borland (15)

Treasurer – Deb Mickelsen (4)

Secretary – Greta Anderson (5)

Mike Ruzek (28)

Gretchen Ramlo (22)

Jan Chuick (18)

Kelly Lady (16)

Chris Stepp (7)

Renee Wangen (5)

Kris Baldus (3)

Ernie Hamero (3)

Ruth Arons (3)

John Duren (3)

Steve Kime (1)

Coulter Wood (1)

Holly Wallace (1)

Mat Miller (1)

Ex-officio Members

Harlan Nelson, Lee Bonorden, Bonnie Mogen, Jack Sherman, Howard Nepp

SPRUCE UP AUSTIN 2017

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 28th year in 2017 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 \$4,664 was spent in 2017. 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 \$7,248. During the twenty-eighth-year history of our organization, the total value to our community exceeds \$528,830. 27 trees and spruce were planted during 2017 bringing the twenty-eighth-year tree total to 2,740.

On April 13, 2017 the Board adopted the management criteria for the endowment fund which was started in 2016. The By-Laws were also revised at the end of 2017 to be approved in 2018 to include the endowment fund language and changes to the process of becoming an ex-officio member.

Public Relations and Education

Yard of the Month: 2017 marked the 15th 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 2017 Yard of the Month were:

- June Clyde Holst; 1001 13th Ave NW
- July Mike and Amy Cooper; 2701 15th Ave NW
- August Dave and Rachelle Root; 1207 4th St SW

Yard and Garden Tour: Our annual fundraising event was cancelled in 2017 as we were unable to secure enough yards. We are already planning for 2018!



On May 2, 2017 we held a community walk on the Tree Trek. It was a great turn out for our first event with 17 community members joining some spruce up members to walk and talk about some of the trees planted on the Trek. Mike Ruzek organized which trees to be showcased for the event with members Kris Baldus, Kelly Lady, Kim Underwood and Ruth Arons helping to give information on several tree's.

Kelly Lady submitted, and we were awarded a grant request from the Hormel Foundation for \$1,500. The grant is to update our web page, Tree Trek map and brochures.

Modern Woodman nominated two SUA board members for their service to our community as Hometown Heroes, Steve Kime and Kim Underwood with a \$100 each to designate to an organization of their choice. Spruce Up Austin was selected with our thanks.

In November some of the Board members and their families volunteered to ring the bell at Shopko for the Salvations Army!

Projects

After 28 years of heading up projects for SUA there is a changing of the guard with Mike Ruzek stepping down as project chair. Chris Stepp, a project committee member, has become the project chair. Mike will continue with the project committee and oversee the Tree Trek.

I. Friday, April 28 Arbor Day:



Planted four Fat Alberts, one at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, one at the new Austin Utilities building and two in Community Bandshell Park. The later were planted in honor of two Board Members achieving five years of service, Greta Anderson and Renee Wangen. The cost of the trees was \$480. The value back to the community totals \$812.

II. Tuesday, August 29:

The partnership continued for “Buffy the Cow” as 9 trees for a backdrop were planted at the Mower County Fair Ground. SUA applied for grant funding from Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services and received another \$500, the Fair Board contributed \$400 and with the contribution of planting and funds from SUA \$420 the project totaled \$2,112 of value back to the community.

III. October 3rd and 4th:

SUA added to the Tree Trek by planting nine more trees, identifying existing trees, with signs and information stickers for all of the above. The effort also included mulching and removing some weeds. Two students came down from the U of M Community Forestry Program who has been consulting since 2014, the beginning of the Tree Trek. The actual cost was \$2,269 but the value to the community is \$3,630. Thirty-one hours of volunteer time was contributed, not including the work of the Park & Recreation crew.

IV. Honorary Trees:

For 2017, six honorary trees were planted at an actual cost of \$736.47 with a value to the community of \$1002.

We would also like to thank our 2017 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!

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 2017 there were six (6) honorary trees planted and dedicated. Austin Parks, Recreation

& Forestry Department plants the honorary trees in the fall of each year. See the list below for those honored in 2017.

A special memorial planting project in 2017 was donated by the Snater Family. The planting incorporates a statue using funds from the Lydia Lien estate given to the Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department. The planting project is located along 8th Avenue SE near Rotary Park.

2017 Spruce up Austin Honorary Program			
Name	Type of Tree	Placement	Tree Sponsor
Mike Ruzek	Yellow Wood	Tree Trek ESL	A.A.F. Board
Girl Scout Troop #47855	Spring Snow	Buffy @ Mower County Fairgrounds	GST #47855, Sherry Schied
Girl Scout Troop #47854	Willow Tree	Community Bandshell Park	GST #47854 Matira Balsley
Janson & Carley Baldus	Willow Tree	Community Bandshell Park	Jeff & Kris Baldus
Greta Anderson	Spruce	Community Bandshell Park	5 year member SUA
Renee Wangen	Spruce	Community Bandshell Park	5 year member SUA

Maintenance

Our 6 maintenance groups continue to watch over their areas and keep them mulched, trimmed and weeded. We also continue our relationship with the Cedar River Watershed District for the Adopt-A-River program by doing the clean up around East Side Lake as well as our Tree Trek.

One of our maintenance groups worked with the Park Department and the 4H group that maintains the South Main project across from Lafayette Park. They did extensive work to make the area a bit lower in maintenance and to clean out some overgrown plantings. The 4H group will continue to maintain this area. We are also working with the Projects Committee on the Kwik Trip/US Bank Island. We will be replanting this project with US Bank agreeing to take on the annual maintenance. It was another busy year and we are ready for 2018!

The 2016 project of planting 10 Swamp White Oaks in honor of the ten presidents for the 125 anniversary of the Hormel Foods Corporation required special care. Due to soil conditions and sun the oaks suffered dryness. Park and Recreation crews diligently watered the trees to keep them alive.

Nominating Committee

No report for 2017.

