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**From the City Manager:** Here are a few updates from this week...

**Council Opportunities:** There are a number of opportunities for you to learn more about and join in on the activities of the City in the next few weeks:

- **Employee and Council Member Library Tour:** Join City staff for a behind-the-scenes sneak peek tour of the Library! The tours will occur between 8/23 and 8/31. Library staff are working very hard this month to prepare the Library for its opening. Sign up here for a 45-minute tour: [Employee & Council Member Library Tour](#)
- **Landfill Open House:** On Thursday, 9/8, 11AM-2PM, Seven Mile Landfill will host an open house. Their invitation reads: "Join us for our Open House, with lunch and informational tours of our landfill and compost facility."
- **Swearing-In Ceremony:** Council Members are invited to the Eau Claire Police Department's Swearing-In Ceremony for Officer Janari Glover on Friday, September 9 at 8:30AM, in the County Board Room. Please let me know if you'd like to attend.
- **New Employee and Council Member Bus Tour:** A number of days have been set aside for new employees and any interested City Council member to tour the City. It will give people an opportunity to learn more about the services that the City provides



As the Library Expansion Project nears completion, City Employees are invited to receive a special "sneak peek" of the remodeled facility! \* Supervisor approval required. \*

August 23rd - 2:00 pm  
 August 24th - 9:00 am, 2:00 pm  
 August 25th - 2:00 pm  
 August 30th - 9:00 am, 2:00 pm  
 August 31st - 9:00 am, 2:00 pm  
 (Tours will last approximately 45 minutes)

Click Here to **Register**  
 or contact your Department's Administrative Associate

Questions? Contact Alia Johnson, 839-4921 or email [alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov](mailto:alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov)




*Swearing In Ceremony for*  
**JANARI GLOVER**  
 Friday, September 9, 2022 @ 8:30 a.m.  
 County Board Room

to the community and the divisions that provide those services. A city bus will transport the group to various City locations, and lunch will be provided. Please let me or Alia Johnson ([alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov](mailto:alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov)) know if you'd like to join in on one of the tours.

- **Brush Site Tour:** The Parks and Forestry Division would like to extend an invitation to Council Members to tour the City's brush site to learn more about the operations there. Please let me know by next Wednesday if you'd like to join in on the tour, and we will schedule a date around the group's availability.

**Next Steps with Referendum:** As mentioned at our last Council meeting, the City has contracted with [Mueller Communications](#) to assist with the informational aspects of the referendum. We will share a calendar of next steps this coming week.

**Council/City Manager Check-In and Strategic Planning:** President Weld and Vice President Berge will be working on a plan for a Council/City Manager check-in, likely in September, before we are booked with budget meetings. This could be done on the same night as a high-level review of the City's strategic vision and goals, which are viewable here: [Vision, Mission & Values | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#). Terry and I discussed the possibility of having four sessions throughout the year, with each session focusing on one of our key community values. Those sessions could be: sustainability, equity and community support, stewardship and efficiency, and community connections and engagement. At these sessions, we can review in some depth current or proposed City initiatives related to the priority area, along with some metrics of the City's well-being. This approach could allow the Council to give feedback on what we are working on now, plus discuss what we might do going forward.

**CAFR Publication:** [The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) was published and submitted to GFOA for award submission. Thanks go to Scott Kosmo, Jennifer Pempek, and the Accounting staff for all their hard work on the financial statements.

**City Urban Wood Practices Recognized:** The City's Forestry Supervisor and the City Urban Wood practices we have implemented were recognized in a recent article from the Wisconsin State Journal. Take a look at the article [linked here](#) and attached to this newsletter, which explains that the program, which started in 2016, conserves a resource while also saving the City money. Here's a quote:

*"Rather than just being put to a landfill or looked at as a waste product, the wood has some value in some form to somebody," said forestry supervisor Matthew Staudenmaier. "It's just a matter of marrying the resource to the need." When crews take down boulevard trees, they try to preserve marketable cuts whenever possible. Smaller branches are chipped, but logs are stockpiled at the city's yard waste site, where sawmills, firewood dealers and even local artisans can bid on it.*

**Sun Country Booking:** The County shared an update regarding its commercial passenger service transition. "Sun Country Airlines' service to and from EAU is now on sale. Sun Country Airlines will

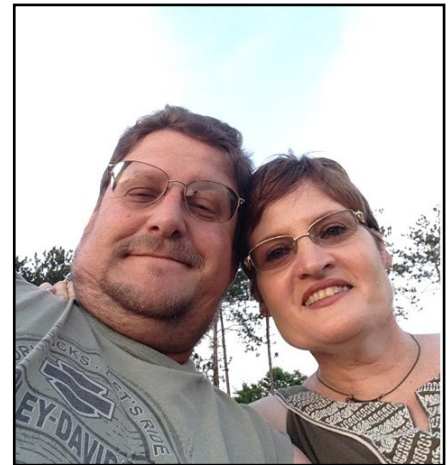
begin service to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) December 1, 2022 and expand to a total of four roundtrip flights per week to MSP starting December 19, 2022. Direct flights to Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) in Ft. Myers, FL will also start December 19, 2022.”

**Landmark Designation Sought:** Note that on September 12th, the Landmarks Commission will be considering local landmark designation of a craftsman style property located at 426 Summit Avenue. The owner of the property contacted the Commission to request the designation.

**Employee Spotlight:** Here’s our next spotlight! (Highlight someone using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

Today we are spotlighting

This week’s spotlight is for **Laurie Komro**! One of Laurie’s co-workers said this about Laurie: *“Laurie is always ready with a smile and a greeting. She is always quick to step outside her official job duties to help with things that need doing. Her helpfulness, cheerfulness, and quality of work put her in a category all her own!”*



Here’s a little bit more about Laurie:

- **Position:** “My job title is Community Services-Buildings and Grounds Worker, and I’ve worked for the City for 6 ½ years.”
- **What people may not know:** “I love playing the piano and truck pulls.”
- **Favorite Activity:** “I love to go camping and kayaking.”
- **Best part about working for the City:** “I love my coworkers and the community.”
- **Life philosophy:** “Always smile - you might brighten someone’s day! Also, always be willing to help someone out - we all have our bad days.”

### **Council Calendar**

- Monday, August 15th: DOR releases 2021 certified equalized, TID, and net new construction values
- Monday, August 22: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, August 23: Regular Council Meeting
  - Wednesday, August 31st: Final deadline for ballot question
  - Tuesday, September 20th, DOR certifies percent change in Consumer Price Index
- Monday, September 12: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 13: Regular Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 26: Regular Council Meeting
  - Possible check-in between City Manager and Council
- Saturday, October 1st: City Council receives 2023 Proposed Operating Budget

- Tuesday, October 4th: Operating Budget work session #1
- Monday, October 10th:
  - Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
  - First Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023 Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 11th: Operating Budget work session #2
- Tuesday, October 18th: Operating Budget work session #3
- Tuesday, October 25th: Operating Budget work session – amendment discussion
  - Tuesday, November 8th: General Election, with referendum ballot question
- TBD in November:
  - Budget amendments due
  - Second Public Hearing on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
  - City Council action on 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
  - City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
  - City Council action on levy

### **Additional Dates**

- Labor Day (City Offices Closed): Monday, 9/5
- Landfill Open House: Thursday, 9/8
- Swearing-In Ceremony for Officer Janari Glover: Friday, 9/9
- City Bus Tour: Dates in September and October. Please let me or Alia Johnson ([alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov](mailto:alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov)) know if you'd like to join in on a tour.
- Employee and Council Member Library Tour: Between 8/23 and 8/31. [Sign up here.](#)

### **Police Department Update**

**Not a Routine Traffic Stop:** On July 27th, just before midnight, an Eau Claire Police Officer observed a vehicle swerving on Clairemont Avenue. The driver continued to demonstrate signs of impairment as he drove south on Fairfax Avenue. The officer activated his emergency lights and stopped the vehicle. Officers are trained to make passenger-side approach to the vehicles when possible for safety reasons and to avoid routine.

As our officer approached the passenger side window, he observed the lone driver with a handgun on his lap. The driver had his right hand on top of the handgun. The gun was pointed in the direction of the driver's door, and the driver was looking out the driver's side window, waiting for the officer to approach on the driver's side.

The officer gave verbal commands to the driver to raise his hands. The driver ignored the commands and placed the handgun in the center console. The officer created the time needed to de-escalate this situation by moving to a safer position.

Additional officers were requested to assist. Once these officers arrived, they were able to open the passenger door and retrieve the handgun while the driver was still in the vehicle. Once the handgun was safely removed, the driver was taken into custody.

The driver had a strong odor of an intoxicating beverage on his breath and admitted to drinking alcohol. The driver was ultimately arrested for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated and being armed while intoxicated. This is an example of how dangerous traffic stops can be, why officers approach a traffic stop with caution, and why we invest in continued training for our officers in order to create safer outcomes.

**Homelessness Outreach Team:** The Police Department has been an active member in numerous programs and part of several committees trying to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness. One challenge that exists is getting people experiencing homelessness connected with the services available in our community.

We have created a Homeless Outreach Team which consists of police officers, ECFD, County Human Services staff, and Western Dairyland staff, who will be working together as a team to physically go out in our community meeting with unhoused people. The goals of this effort include explaining available services and also serving as a resource to connect individuals with needed services. Research has shown that the best approach for this type of multi-disciplinary team is to concentrate effort on a limited number of people. The team will be identifying individuals based on data received on high utilization of emergency services. Our first planned deployment of this outreach team is August 18th.

**Crisis Intervention Training:** The Wisconsin Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a strong proponent of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for police. Eau Claire, having a strong commitment to the principles of CIT, was selected for the billboard advertisement shown here. The ECPD's CIT training program, in partnership with NAMI Chippewa Valley and other local partners, has trained over 150 police officers throughout the Chippewa Valley in crisis intervention and de-escalation skills for individuals in crisis. This billboard will be displayed on East Clairemont Ave. through August 24th as a reminder that specially trained officers are here to help if you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis.



**Community Events:** The Police Department participated in a few community outreach events over the weekend. The Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association (ECAHMAA) invited the Eau Claire Police Department to their 2nd annual community picnic on August 6th at Riverview Park. It was a great opportunity to meet and have some fun with the Hmong community and staff from ECAHMAA. On August 7th, we participated in the annual Miracle League of the Chippewa Valley by pitching and fielding while children of special needs hit and ran the bases. It was a successful event that allows all to enjoy the game of baseball.



**Agility Test:** Also last weekend, the Police Department administered the physical agility test for new officer applicants. As part of the PD's third recruitment process this year, new applicants participated in a written exam and physical agility test that consisted of a vertical jump, agility run, sit-ups, 300-meter run, push-ups, and a 1.5-mile run.



### **Elections Update**

**Record Turnout:** There were 12,447 ballots cast in the City of Eau Claire for the August 9th Partisan Primary, which represents about 32 percent of registered voters. It is the highest number of voters for a Fall Partisan Primary in the documented turnout history for the City, which dates back to the 1980s. Thank you to our dedicated poll workers and staff for another successful election process.

## **Information Technology Update**

**Printer Software:** Over the past couple of weeks, City IT staff has been working with EO Johnson to implement new hardware and software on all of the City copy machines. This new system has several benefits, ranging from increased security and better tracking of use and job costing to features that can cut paper waste by 10-15 percent. As with any new system, every single scenario needed or wanted by departments cannot be predicted. With the new system, when an employee prints from any office, they can go anywhere in the city and login to any printer using their badge to release the held print job. This increases security and reduces waste which, in turn, reduces the need for machine maintenance.

## **Health Department Update:**

**Covid Update:** The Health Department passed along an update regarding Covid. They shared that our community moved to a “low” COVID-19 community level. In addition, the CDC made changes to their recommendations regarding COVID-19. Here is a simple [summary of updated guidance](#). And, Lieske appeared here providing an explanation of the updates: [Health Department Director discusses new CDC COVID-19 guidelines \(weau.com\)](#)





CITY OF  
**EAU  
CLAIRE**

**LANDMARKS  
COMMISSION**



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**Date:** August 8, 2022

**To:** City Council  
Plan Commission  
City Attorney  
Community Services Department  
Engineering Department  
Fire Department  
Police Department  
City-County Health Department

**From:** Community Development Director

**Re:** Proposed Local Landmark Designation – 426 Summit Ave.

This memo is to advise you that the Landmarks Commission will be considering the local landmark designation of the property located at 426 Summit Avenue on September 12, 2022. The owner of the property contacted the Commission to request the designation. The house is of craftsman style and contributing to the Third Ward Historic District.

Pursuant to the Landmarks Ordinance (Chapter 2.65 of the Eau Claire General Ordinances), the Landmarks Commission must notify you of the pending designation. Any comments concerning the proposed designation should be forwarded to Senior Planner, Ned Noel, by September 7<sup>th</sup>.

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Scott Allen  
Director of Community Development



## Search for value, carbon

Irregular shapes of city trees won't stop advocates of reuse

**CHRIS HUBBUCH**

chubbuch@madison.com

When architect David Rousseau designed a manufacturing facility for Promega Corp., he specified a unique material for the lobby stairs: Walnut trees from the biotech company's land.

Cut for various reasons over the preceding decades, the trees had been sawed and dried at a nearby mill and stored on the Fitchburg campus for just such a use.

Rousseau, who lives in British Columbia but has worked with Promega on multiple projects over the past three decades, designed the \$120 million Feynman Center to look more like a retreat than a factory, with soaring laminated wood beams and floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook a restored prairie.

Incorporating local timber was a way to honor the trees while making use of locally sourced materials.

"We love the quality of wood, we love to work with wood," Rousseau said. "If we have to remove them, we like to see them reborn in place."

Most of the lumber used in U.S. construction comes from managed forests, where trees grow tall and straight, producing wood that can be efficiently harvested and milled into uniform products.

Trees cut from city streets and lots are generally considered waste to be ground into mulch for ground cover or thrown into landfills.

That urban wood could provide a valuable stream of locally sourced building materials that could lock up millions of tons of heat-trapping gases. The only problem is figuring out how to create markets for an irregular material in a mass-production economy.

Please see **URBAN WOOD**, Page A8



Paul Morrison, owner of The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin, shows logs stockpiled at the town of Oregon mill where he cuts, dries and builds with wood from urban trees that could otherwise be turned into mulch.

**AMBER ARNOLD PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL**



Generally seen as waste, wood from urban trees can be a valuable resource, but there are challenges to marketing an irregular material in a mass-production economy.

From A1

A network of arborists, municipalities, mills and manufacturers is working to change that by promoting urban wood as a valuable carbon-trapping resource that can be used for pallets, furniture and even commercial construction.

According to a U.S. Forest Service study, the nation's urban trees contain about 919 million tons of carbon dioxide, a heat-trapping gas

that is rapidly altering the earth's climate. Those trees suck up another 36.6 million tons of carbon each year, which is equivalent to roughly 2% of U.S. passenger vehicle emissions.

While most valuable as trees, nothing lives forever. Roughly 2.2 billion cubic feet of wood is cut from city streets, parks and backyards each year, about 7% of the volume harvested from forests. Much of that is too small or oddly shaped to be used as lumber, but there's enough good hardwood — worth more than \$750 million — to produce the equivalent of nearly 1.3 billion 12-foot shelves. "It's a lot of wood," said George Berghorn, an assistant professor of construction management and forestry at Michigan State University. "It's also a lot of carbon."

While the use of urban wood alone will not solve the world's climate crisis, it is one of a handful of strategies for capturing more of Wisconsin's carbon emissions in the trees that cover nearly half the state, according to a recent report by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

When wood is burned or decomposes, that carbon is released back into the atmosphere. If used in buildings, furniture or other wood products, the carbon remains trapped for decades. Milling and using the wood locally also means not having to burn diesel fuel to move it long distances.

That all sounds good, but there are challenges.

Urban wood typically isn't graded or standardized like other lumber, so architects are often reluctant to use it. Supplies are unpredictable, since trees aren't cut to order. And unlike trees in a forest, urban trees spread branches far and wide, making it harder to get the long, straight logs that most mills want.

"People are so accustomed to the convenience of going to the store and buying the lumber you need right then and there," said August Hoppe, a Milwaukee arborist who processes about 15% of the trees he cuts down through his Urban Wood Lab. "There's a more thoughtful process to urban wood."

### **Selling a story**

Dwayne Sperber has been working for years to solve that problem, supplying wood from southeastern Wisconsin for commercial building projects through his Delafield company, Wudeward Urban Forest Products.

"If anything, I'm in the recycling business," Sperber said. "It isn't quite the commodity that traditional wood is. It just is."

But the wood comes with a story: Local origin, unique character, environmental benefits.

As a member of the Urban Wood Network, Sperber is working to sell that story and develop industry standards so that architects, designers and contractors can feel more comfortable using it in commercial building projects.

Sperber has supplied wood for the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee and Madison's Pinney Library. He also helped SSM Health turn a stand of walnut trees cut down to make way for a new South Side clinic into veneer covering for the reception desk.

"There's a lot of opposition because it's a different ordering process," Sperber said. "I can make it easy."

### **Preserving memories**

To Paul Morrison, the irregularities in urban wood aren't flaws, but character.

Growing up in the Fox Valley, Morrison was a kid "who liked tools more than toys." His grandfather was a woodworker, and he remembers the smell of the local sawmill where they brought trees from their farm.

There's a sense of mourning when we lose the trees that shade our yards and hold our swings, clotheslines and memories, Morrison said.

"Literally, the carbon in those trees is what we exhaled as we enjoyed the shade under those trees. The connection is that real," Morrison said. "Those memories can be preserved."

An engineer by training, Morrison quit his state job in 2001 and turned his hobby into a business, The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin.

He works with homeowners, arborists and local municipalities who are taking down trees to identify usable lumber, which is stockpiled around his mill in the town of Oregon, where he and his nine employees cut and dry the wood.

Some boards are turned into handcrafted furniture and cabinets, others returned to their owners. Some have turned up in buildings like the new Verona High School and Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Morrison also sells lumber to woodworkers through his store and Habitat for Humanity's ReStores.

“People have forgotten that things can be made from the resources around us,” Morrison said. “We don’t have to source our wood from the north woods.”

The concept of urban wood isn’t new, but the industry got a kickstart in the early 2000s when emerald ash borer beetles were first discovered in Michigan.

As the invasive pests spread to neighboring states, including Wisconsin, cities scrambled to remove millions of ash trees before they became infested and died. The mass removal became a catalyst for efforts to find the best use of the wood.

The city of Eau Claire started an urban wood diversion program in 2016, about a year before the invasive pest arrived.

“Rather than just being put to a landfill or looked at as a waste product, the wood has some value in some form to somebody,” said forestry supervisor Matthew Staudenmaier. “It’s just a matter of marrying the resource to the need.”

When crews take down boulevard trees, they try to preserve marketable cuts whenever possible. Smaller branches are chipped, but logs are stockpiled at the city’s yard waste site, where sawmills, firewood dealers and even local artisans can bid on it.

Staudenmaier said some constituents assumed the wood was worth a lot of money, but in reality buyers were not willing to pay top dollar for “run-of-the-mill street trees” like maple, ash and locust full of knots and other irregularities.

But giving wood away costs the city less than the alternative.

“We’re not spending the money grinding it,” Staudenmaier said. “If people can take it in the round form ... that’s a cost avoidance.”

### **To the chipper**

With more than a quarter of a million trees in its parks and public right-of-ways, the city of Madison cuts down as many as 3,000 trees a year as they succumb to age, disease and storm damage.

In 2016, when city crews were preemptively removing thousands of ash trees, the parks department made some logs available to local sawyers like Morrison, who returned some to the city in the form of conference tables.

While city leaders praised the project at the time, the additional work wasn’t worth the payoff, said streets superintendent Charlie Romines,

who has overseen the city's forestry service for most of the past 12 years.

"We decided we'd give it a try," Romines said. "It didn't go particularly well."

Today the city sends its trees to the chipper, generating mulch that's sold to farmers and landscapers and used as ground cover, including as safety-certified playground chips, which Romines said would otherwise cost up to \$300,000 a year.

"We're getting pretty good value — between selling the mulch ... and displacing the cost that parks would otherwise have to pay."

Of course, the majority of urban trees aren't on public land.

For private arborists, finding higher uses for the wood can provide additional revenue streams, but it's also more work.

Big mills typically aren't interested in buying small, irregular batches of wood, so many times reuse depends on customers who want their wood back, whether in boards or a finished product.

"A lot of people just want it to go away," Hoppe said.

Brent Valentine, co-owner of Hartwood Tree Co., said he's been working since he started his business in 2010 to find higher uses for the wood, but said there are logistical challenges and typically depends on customers being willing to pay to have their trees processed.

Later this year he plans to use some of his wood as siding on a new building on Madison's South Side that could provide space to sell more lumber.

"It's a fun part of the business that requires a lot more effort than just paying to get rid of it," Valentine said. "But one we're willing to explore."

While it's often used for sentimental and aesthetic reasons, urban wood can also be used as flooring, window and door casings, upholstered furniture and even pallets, said Kari Divine, executive director of the Sustainable Resources Institute, a Michigan nonprofit that promotes sustainable forestry.

Madison arborist John Stephenson is working with the U.S. Forest Service to set up protocols for arborists to make better use of bolt wood, logs that are too short to make boards but can be used to make shipping pallets, which are in high demand.

"Urban wood is much more than live edge slabs," Divine said. "We have to go beyond that market. Urban wood is that and a whole lot more."



Tim Boettner, left, and Matt McCoy carry a piece of walnut cut from a log at The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin in the town of Oregon. Put to other uses instead of mulching or landfilled, urban wood can lock up millions of tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide.

**AMBER ARNOLD PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL**



Andy Linch puts pieces of walnut to be used for a cabinet into a sanding machine at The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin in Oregon.





The stairs at Promega's Feynman Center are made from walnut trees harvested on the company's property in Fitchburg, which architect David Rousseau said was an effort to honor the trees.

### **Beyond aesthetics**



Wood that has been milled is labeled with the street name of where it came from as it dries in a solar kiln at The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin.

**"People have forgotten that things can be made from the resources around us. We don't have to source our wood from the north woods."**

**Paul Morrison**, owner of The Wood Cycle of Wisconsin

### **Battling beetles**



## Berghorn



## Sperber



## Romines



## Valentine



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