



TO: Environmental Commission Members
RE: Resolution to Support Natural Features Amendments to UDC
DATE: 26 January 2023

Please note: This resolution is intended to open study and discussion about these amendments by members of the EC and others, which will go on at least over the next month. Voting on this will occur after that review, earliest next month. These changes are large and complicated. We welcome your questions and comments as soon as you can (Zoom can be arranged if you wish): Christopher Graham grahamz@umich.edu

Whereas, the City of Ann Arbor has declared a climate emergency and adopted a Climate Action Plan which at least acknowledged the importance of trees, and called for the protection and enhancement of our “tree canopy”

Whereas, Doug Tallamy and Richard Darke in their books “Bringing Nature Home” and “The Living Landscape” brought far more recognition to the need to use our communities, our backyards to support the diversity of life including birds, pollinators, caterpillars, trees and native plants.

Whereas such restoration work is as important as carbon emissions reduction in protecting Earth’s human life giving biome. The costs of such work are surprisingly low.

Whereas, Ann Arbor is fortunate to have natural areas of public and private Woodlands, especially Native Forest Fragments, that are our own refuges of native species. They are models of native ecosystems we can bring to our backyards.

Whereas, we are also fortunate to have a Natural Areas Program in our City, which for 25 years has worked to restore and sustain the diversity of native species on our Natural Areas. Their work can guide our own efforts

Whereas, for 20 years protections for our Natural Features in the City have been part of the Site Planning process for development, which has reduced loss of Natural Features.

Whereas, it is vital to protect as many old trees as we can, especially natives. They sink the most carbon and recharge the most rain to the soil.

Whereas, the original Natural Features amendments were adopted in the early 2000's, much has since been learned and now more is needed.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Environmental Commission recommends to Council that these new proposed, draft amendments to the Unified Development Code be accepted, then promptly sent to the Planning Commission and Planning staff for review and consideration.

Resolved, that since plans are imminent to condense the City's Master Plans into a single document, likely much reducing the "presence" of the City's concern for Natural Features to a few abbreviated pages, that the Council ask the CPC to consider the matter without delay.

Resolved, that since these matters involve issues not generally or fully in the wheelhouse of Planners, that Planning staff along with the City Forester be asked to collaborate with members of the Environmental Commission and its Natural Features Committee, to work on changes as may be important to them.

Resolved, that the Council ask the CPC and Planning Staff to concurrently begin work in collaboration with the EC and the NFC on a Best Management Practices Handbook.

Resolved, that the CPC be asked to transmit the revised, proposed amendments to the Attorney's Office for review at the earliest possible date, again with request to them for review without delay.

Resolved, that the Council ask that after the Attorney, final CPC and EC review of proposed language, that recommendations be made to Council to adopt the changes into Code.

Resolved, that final draft language be brought back to the Council within this calendar year.