



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1613, **Version:** 1

Resolution in Support of Natural Features Working Group Proposal to UM SEAS

Whereas, the City's Natural Features Master Plan (2004) called for more thorough inventory of the City's Natural Features, especially of Woodlands;

Whereas our current Woodlands information cannot distinguish a Native Forest Fragment from a Buckthorn thicket, when much more detailed information is vital to have in GIS format;

Whereas, the 2004 Master Plan also called for an outreach program to work with people in neighborhoods to teach them about their local landscapes, natural features, water resources and conservation -- with an eye to encouraging them to become better, more sustainable stewards of those landscapes;

Whereas, a Council requested review of the status of the "Natural Features Ordinance" (2016) resulted in a set of recommendations that also called for significant strides in knowledge of our natural features, particularly of forests across the City, and it called for an outreach program to help people know how to develop more sustainable landscapes and conserve water on the land;

Whereas, it has become increasingly clear that many natural ecosystems and the diversity of species in them are facing an alarming possibility of collapse and extinction, world-wide and in Michigan;

Whereas it is known that older trees (especially Oaks, which are highly represented in Ann Arbor's Native Forest Fragments) are outstanding at sequestering carbon (thousands of pounds a year, per tree), and they are huge caterpillar habitats (pollinators);

Whereas it would cost many tens of thousands of dollars to hire consultants to accomplish these efforts for the City, when dollars may be hard to come by in the near term for such purposes;

Whereas it is likely this project would also produce far more useful results than any consultant could provide and would include enough field work to gain good confidence in the data;

Whereas most of the work in this project with UM School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) students would be led by non-City employees;

Resolved that the City Council of Ann Arbor supports the proposal of its Natural Features Working Group to enlist the help of master's students at UM SEAS, and requests that the proposal to be transmitted by the NFWG to UM SEAS before the program's October 26 deadline;

Resolved that City Council, City Staff, and Environmental Commission be supportive of this project, including but not limited to modest financial assistance for the master's students; cooperation and coordination with City Staff in bringing the data collected into the City's GIS system and new Natural Features webpages; and the City's Urban Forestry Plan be improved to include a plan for all forests

and trees in the City, as such a plan would have a strong long term value in the City's work to mitigate climate change.

Sponsored by Councilmember Bannister