



PAROWAN CITY SHADE TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
PAROWAN CITY OFFICES - 35 E 100 N, PAROWAN, UT 84761

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Heidi Toia (Chair), Vern Fridley, Ryan Johnson, Ron Roth, Councilmember Lyle Barton

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF PRESENT: Callie Bassett, City Recorder

EXCUSED: Justin Dalley

PUBLIC PRESENT: Ronnie Barton

Call to Order

The Shade Tree Committee meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM on March 5, 2026.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 5, 2026

Heidi Toia moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 5, 2026. Seconded by Vern Fridley. The motion was approved unanimously.

Discussion Regarding Plans for Arbor Day

Vern Fridley presented detailed plans for the 2026 Arbor Day celebration, which he had previously outlined in an email sent on February 10th. His comprehensive proposal included several key components that the committee thoroughly discussed.

Vern proposed having an official proclamation declaring Saturday, May 2nd as Arbor Day in Parowan, encouraging residents to plant trees in honor of the city's 250th anniversary. He explained that Callie Bassett, city recorder, had already made necessary changes to the proclamation draft, making it ready for city council approval.

The plan included a ceremonial tree planting near the north fence of the Meeks cabin yard, with no impact on existing planting beds. Vern noted that the city crew could dig holes and install water lines prior to the event since they do not work on Fridays or Saturdays. The mayor would read the proclamation during a short program, and Jet Smith, the city's events planner, was ready to provide support including loudspeakers and folding chairs.

For educational outreach, Vern suggested negotiating a school assembly during the week prior to the official Arbor Day. He had already met with Principal Heaton, who welcomed an Arbor Day program at 8:00 AM on Friday, May 1st. The assembly would be held indoors, which Ron Roth noted was different from past outdoor school celebrations. Vern explained that during his tenure, assemblies were always held indoors, though they did plant trees with older students afterward.

Ryan Johnson, a state forestry employee, had confirmed his availability for both events using flex time, as state employees do not work on Fridays. Ryan often has twelve Arbor Day programs a year, so we are lucky he is available on our chosen dates.

The discussion turned to tree selection, where Vern noted Ryan's strong preference against planting large, showy trees from nurseries. Ryan's position was that large trees require extensive root pruning, causing them to take 2-3 years before resuming growth, while smaller trees with unpruned roots begin growing immediately. To address this educational opportunity while meeting ceremonial needs, Vern proposed planting two trees - one normal-sized and one larger - allowing Ryan to demonstrate the growth differences.

Committee members discussed the specific location for the tree planting. There was some confusion about the exact spot, but it was clarified that there are designated areas near the community garden site where water will already be available. These spots are located outside the Meeks cabin fence, in an area that also houses old farm equipment. The committee agreed that Vern Fridley, Justin Dalley, and other relevant parties should walk the area together to finalize the location.

Ron Roth asked about water sources for the community garden, learning that both culinary and irrigation water would be available, with irrigation used as long as possible before switching to culinary water when necessary. The community garden project, which may include 6-10 garden plots depending on grant funding, is being managed separately from the Shade Tree Committee.

Regarding the Heritage Foundation's involvement, Lyle Barton, who serves on that committee, offered to coordinate with Kristen Robinson about potentially opening the Meeks cabin for tours during the Arbor Day celebration. The committee discussed whether this would enhance or detract from the tree-focused event, concluding it could be offered as an additional activity after the main program.

Vern Fridley also shared a copy of the proclamation draft, noting that while it contained many "whereas" clauses that typically lose children's attention during assemblies, it was necessary for the official ceremony.

Lyle Barton moved to proceed forward with the details regarding the Arbor Day through the school and through the city, so we can have finalized plans. Seconded by Heidi Toia. The motion was passed unanimously.

Member Reports

Ron Roth provided an enthusiastic update on the restoration work being done at Meeks Park pond by Justin Dalley, Aldo Biasi, and the public works crew. He described their efforts as "tremendous work" and detailed several major improvements: the diversion ditch is now covered and serves as a pathway, the diversion gate is functioning properly, and the dam (or invert) at the pond's exit is working to control water levels and flow through the creek.

However, Ron noted a significant problem with people driving ATVs and trucks throughout the cleared area, creating damage. Road closed signs have been posted, but people continue to access the area from the east side. The solution involves installing a log fence like the one at the bike park around the entire Meeks Park perimeter to prevent unauthorized vehicle access.

Ron shared historical context, explaining that he had previously addressed similar problems years ago by purchasing boulders, which Max Alger (an old-timer backhoe operator for Parowan) had strategically placed to block vehicle access to the pond. The public works crew is now repurposing those same boulders around the exit dam area, creating an attractive appearance while maintaining functionality.

Vern Fridley expressed frustration that the approved tree list still had not been published, explaining that friends keep asking about it. He was told that publication is pending city approval.

There was discussion about conducting a genetic study on a Dalton Adams tree, with plans to contact Dayla (who runs Sweet Pea and teaches at the university) and Josh at the UVU extension office, though both contacts are currently very busy.


The committee confirmed plans to hold their regular meeting on the first Thursday of April to finalize Arbor Day celebration details and make necessary assignments for volunteer help.

Public Comments (if any)

No public comments were made during this portion of the meeting.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, and it passed unanimously. The next meeting was scheduled for the first Thursday in April at 7:00 PM to address final Arbor Day celebration preparations. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



Callie Bassett, City Recorder
Date Approved: 4/02/2026