



CITY OF CLEVELAND

Office of the Council

Blaine A. Griffin

PRESIDENT OF CITY COUNCIL

FILE NO. 412-2025

www.clevelandcitycouncil.org

March 26, 2025

Cleveland City Council
Room 220, City Hall

RE: Appointments to Urban Forestry Commission

Dear Council Members:

Pursuant to Chapter 163 of the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, Cleveland City Council appoints some members to the Urban Forestry Commission; currently there are some open seats to fill. Anyone interested was able to apply for this commission, and applications were reviewed by the steering committee of the Urban Forestry Commission. I have reviewed the applications and recommend that Council make the following appointments:

<i>Name, Organization, Title</i>	<i>Term Ending</i>	<i>Appointment Category</i>
Tom Schreiber, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Manager of Community Forestry	December 31, 2027	Certified arborist
Jennifer Chandler, CHN Housing Partners, Assistant Director of the Real Estate Development	December 31, 2027	Developer who has completed projects in the City
Laura Marks, Collinwood resident, long-time tree activist	December 31, 2027	City resident representative
Beck Swab, Holden Forests & Gardens, Director of Conservation and Community Forestry	December 31, 2027	Representatives of a non-profit or non-governmental organization whose mission is to advocate for preservation or enhancement of urban forests, wildlife habitat, or similar natural systems
Sara Tillie, Cleveland Tree Coalition, Executive Director	December 31, 2025 (will fill unexpired term)	

For your information, attached is some information about each person.

We will consider these appointments at the City Council meeting on March 31, 2025, and without objection they will be approved. Should you need more information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Blaine A. Griffin
Council President

Recommendations for appointments by Council to Urban Forestry Commission (March 2025)

Jennifer Chandler (Developer seat)

I am the Assistant Director of the Real Estate Development department at CHN Housing Partners, where I assist in expanding CHN's portfolio of affordable housing in Northeast Ohio, and I have worked in housing and community development in Cleveland since 2017. In my role, I provide guidance and support to project management staff, and oversee a variety of developments funded through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, both single-family and multi-family, new construction and preservation, as well as family, senior, and permanent supportive housing. I began my career in affordable housing in 2018, working for the City of Cleveland in the Department of Community Development, where I awarded and administered HOME funding, tax abatement, and assisted in the disposition of City land bank properties for housing development. I am an advocate for tree preservation and the provision of high-quality affordable housing proximate to essential amenities, such as grocery stores and high-frequency public transit – all of which are crucial to improving Clevelanders' quality of life and neighborhood health. As a Cleveland resident and someone who predominantly gets around on foot, bike, and bus, I understand firsthand how critically important trees are to walkability, air quality and cooling, safety, placemaking and neighborhood character, and property values.

Laura Marks (City Resident seat)

Laura is the founder of Heights Tree People and moved to Collinwood two years ago. She has decades of experience tree planting, community organizing, and advocacy for trees.

Beck Swab (Nonprofit seat)

Beck Swab is an experienced conservation professional currently serving as the Director of Conservation and Community Forestry at Holden Forests & Gardens since June 2022. Prior to this role, Beck was an Adjunct Lecturer at The Ohio State University and held the position of Conservation Manager at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, where contributions included managing natural systems and building partnerships for community science initiatives. Beck also served as a Senior Research Scientist at MAD Scientist Associates, LLC, focusing on ecological research and professional training development. Previous experience includes directing restoration ecology and land management projects at the Wilds from June 2015 to April 2020. Beck holds a PhD in Ecology with a focus on climate change and plants from the University of California, Riverside, as well as a Master's and Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science from The Ohio State University.

Sara Tillie (Nonprofit seat-will complete unexpired term)

Sara joined the Cleveland Tree Coalition in July 2024 with a commitment to center equity and focus in on the connection between urban forestry and public health. She has previously served in the public sector at the City of Cleveland Department of Public Health and Lorain County Public Health. In her current role as the Executive Director, Sara advocates for equitable tree planting and maintenance, with a focus on genuine community engagement and empowerment. She has a Masters in Public Health from Case Western Reserve University and a Masters in Urban Planning and Development from Cleveland State University. Her favorite places to be among trees are on the Cleveland Metroparks trails and in the Adirondacks, in upstate New York.

Tom Schreiber (Certified Arborist seat)

Tom Schreiber is the Manager of Community Forestry for Western Reserve Land Conservancy and an ISA Certified Arborist. At the Land Conservancy, he leads a team that is focused on growing Cleveland's tree canopy, specifically in the city's underserved neighborhoods. Tom has been with the Land Conservancy since October 2020 and developed maintenance SOPs and training materials for Tree Crew. Tom assists with Tree Steward program delivery, pruning workshops, and planting workshops. Tom is a resident of Cleveland and serves on its Urban Forestry Commission.