

January 7th, 2026

Meeting Purpose: *to introduce reps from VMNH and GIC, discuss grant opportunity from Allen Family Philanthropies Foundation*

Participants: GIC (Kendall Topping, Jessica Huang, Matt Lee), Martinsville City (Tree Board, Myiah Terry), VMNH (Collin VanBuren, Hayden Bassett)

I. About the Grant:

Focus – climate change mitigation in United States

Test solutions for barriers for climate mitigation; includes financial, logistical, gov, social

Co-funding: assurance that project won't end when grant ends

II. Barriers – multifaceted

A. Education – re: Public resistance to trees – private homeowners choosing removal of trees on their property is large obstacle

1. Public outreach education – esp. youth (Student Urban Forestry Program)

2. Right Tree Right Place – choosing the most appropriate, best choice trees when we plant

3. Public Partnerships – HVAC companies seem to have local public trust

a. Martinsville Utilities – data from areas with southside canopy cover

B. Kudzu/Invasive Vines -

1. Kudzu – hugely invasive in South US, management is difficult, possibly sequesters carbon

C. Cost

1. Educate public on money-saving/energy saving qualities of trees

D. Labor

1. Volunteer Programs – ie. “Trash Pandas” - litter pickup -> Kudzu elimination, mitigation volunteer team

2. Community Programs – Kudzu Fair,

3. City Employee/Dept. - new job position: City Arborist

a. Can we demonstrate that the arborist position continues after the grant runs out – set metric – if goals are met, this justifies continuing position

b. Need numbers re: savings (ex. Utilities studies from other localities, compare our city utilities cost from high canopy covered areas to low)

- can obtain from Martinsville Utilities at household level

- GIC could do Southern Aspect Analysis comparing temps from areas with tree cover to the south

Next Steps:

GIC to confer with director Karen Firehock Friday morning (1/9) to confirm scope of participation, can meet again early next week to discuss.

Collin (VMNH) to send Letter of Intent draft to Tree Board and share with GIC

Martinsville to confer with City Management and finance (esp. re: grant match)