

**City of Kalamazoo
TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes
November 2, 2021**

Electronic Meeting

Members

Present: Brian LaBelle, Forester, COK
Anthony Ladd, Public Works Division Manager, COK
Erik Injerd, Forester, Consumers Energy
Patrick McVerry, Deputy Director - Parks & Recreation, COK
Steve Skalski, Water Superintendent & Asst. City Engineer, COK
Gail Walter, Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC)

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Dr. Mara Matison, Austrins Family Dentistry
Marite Strautins, Austrins Family Dentistry
Dara Smith, KNHS
Matt Milcarek, KNHS

A. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Ladd called the electronic meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Committee Chair Ladd completed roll call and determined the aforementioned members were present.

C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Committee Chair Ladd introduced guest:

- Dr. Mara Matison, Austrins Family Dentistry
- Marite Strautins, Austrins Family Dentistry
- Dara Smith, KNHS
- Matt Milcarek, KNHS

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee Chair Ladd requested we postponed the discussion for Item C, under New Business, Angling Road, for a later date. Plans for this project are not finalized.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to approve the November 2, 2021 Agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion was carried.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (July 6, 2021)

Committee Member McVerry supported by Committee Member LaBelle moved approval of the July 6, 2021 Committee Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. NEW BUSINESS

437 Stone Street – Tree Removal – Austrins Family Dentistry

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removal at 437 Stone Street presented by Austrins Family Dentistry.

Dr. Mara Matison, with Austrins Family Dentistry, provided photos of the tree and explained there is a large walnut tree that drops numerous walnuts outside the entrance of the office that the patients must walk through, including elderly patients. She noted the City came out and trimmed the tree a few years ago. There is a large branch that has a large hole in it. She stated they have asked for several years to have this tree removed. They refinished the basement this year and discovered a large tree root growing through the basement wall from under the front porch area.

Ms. Marite Strautins, with Austrins Family Dentistry, stated she is nearing 70 years old, due to COVID 19, the patients are required to wait in their car until they are ready for them. She stated she is required to go get the patients and while doing this she has experienced walnuts falling on them. She stated it is a very hazardous situation. This year a branch fell and was dangling from the wires and the wires were sparking. They had to close the office until Consumers could come out and remove it.

Dr. Matison stated they have been asking since 2013 to have this tree removed. Committee Member Steve Skalski noted he remembers them bringing this tree before the Committee in the past. He stated at that meeting the Committee recommended trimming the tree.

Committee Member LaBelle stated this is a black walnut tree. Committee Chair Ladd noted the black walnut tree is listed as one of the prohibited tree species for right of way trees per the City Ordinance.

Committee Member LaBelle stated this tree is in fair condition. It has been trimmed a lot by Consumers and the City. The hollow pocket is small and is not something to be concerned with at this time due to the black walnut tree being a hard wood.

Dr. Matison stated the tree root is growing about five feet underneath the porch and into the basement foundation and is not accessible to be able to trim it. A discussion followed.

Committee Member Injerd stated he doesn't see a utility conflict with this tree because there appears to be a secondary voltage which would not warrant much trimming. Judging by the picture, we have the appropriate clearance that is needed.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he is in favor of removing the tree if a two for one replacement is agreed to.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to approve the removal of the tree with two small size, mature height, replacement trees. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Committee Chair Ladd explained to Dr. Matison that Brian LaBelle would be in contact with her regarding the tree removal process and selection/planting of replacement trees.

1010 N. Rose Street – Tree Removal – KNHS Home Ownership Services

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for tree removal at 1010 N. Rose Street presented by KNHS Home Ownership Services.

Mr. Matt Milcarek, with KNHS Home Ownership Services, provided photos and a site plan of the tree and explained this is in connection with the New Construction Intro Housing Projects in partnership with the City and the Foundation of Excellence dollars and partnership with the Home Builders Association. On N. Rose Street they have two properties acquired from the Land Bank. One property was wide and the other was skinny and unbuildable. They evened out the lot lines with the two properties to form two buildable lots. With this came driveway changes. The skinny lot has a shared driveway. Feedback from the neighborhood is they do not like shared driveways. The trees are in line with where the driveways will be installed.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if this went to site plan. Mr. Milcarek stated they have an un-official site plan and have had several meetings throughout the summer where a fair amount of Community Planning Development staff has been involved. He added they are willing to plant replacement trees where needed.

Committee Member Walter stated she noticed an existing curb cut and driveway to the north of the northern house and asked for more information on a shared driveway option. Mr. Milcarek stated the driveway on the north side of the other parcel was a historically shared driveway. Two-thirds of the driveway is on the property of the other house to the north and the other part of the driveway is on the property they are developing. This is the only driveway for the existing property to the north. When they redesigned the properties, they left that driveway exclusively for the existing property to the north and then used the existing curb cut for the new property they are developing. He noted they received a lot of feed-back on the development of the properties and the Northside does not have a lot of side-by-side driveways. They wanted to match the existing neighborhood character and for this reason they were not in favor the side-by-side driveway.

Committee Member LaBelle noted the two trees are 18” diameter Honeywell. He stated he did not see any defects. The tree has not been pruned much.

Committee Chair Ladd noted there are a lot of trees, both mature and new trees in this area. He noted if they allow this removal, Farral Park is in the area and would be a good place to plant replacement trees. Committee Member McVerry confirmed there is room in the park for additional tree plantings.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he would recommend replacing four for one since the trees are in good condition. Committee Member Skalski and Committee Member McVerry agreed with Committee Member LaBelle’s suggestion of replacing four for one.

Committee Member Injerd stated they would need to prune around the wires before the trees are removed. Committee Member LaBelle stated a contractor would need to be hired to do the removal of the trees.

Mr. Milcarek stated he would like to pour the driveway as soon as possible. With the impending weather, they may have to wait till early spring.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to approve the removal of the two trees, replacing four for one, and planting replacement trees in Farral Park. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

G. OLD BUSINESS

Bank Street Realignment Project – Tree Species

Committee Chair Ladd stated the site is developing very nicely. The landscaping will not happen this year. Over the winter, they plan is to revisit the landscaping plan and find suitable replacement trees for the trees that were removed.

H. ACTION ITEMS

None.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Committee Member Walter stated she would like to plant three trees in the curb lawn in front of her home. Committee Member LaBelle stated she would need to contact him, present her request, and he would work with her to select the correct tree species. A right-of-way permit would be required. Committee Chair Ladd instructed her to fill out the right-of-way permit application which can be found on the City's website. Once the permit is submitted, Brian LaBelle would contact her.

Committee Chair Ladd stated we have started our second large-scale tree planting contract this year. We are planting 300 trees in the City right-of-way.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Walter, made a motion to adjourn the Tree Committee meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Submitted by: *Karen Penneyford* Date: 12-13-21
Recording Secretary

Approved by: *ADB* Date: 12/16/21
Staff Liaison