

**City of Kalamazoo
TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes
December 7, 2021**

Electronic Meeting

Members

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

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Anita DeVisser - Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.
Chad Robinson – Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.
Chase Gerbig - Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

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:

- Anita DeVisser - Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.
- Chad Robinson – Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.
- Chase Gerbig - Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, moved approval of the December 7, 2021 Tree Committee Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (November 2, 2021)

Committee Member Skalski noted Committee Member LaBelle was incorrectly recorded as Committee Chair under New Business – 437 Stone Street – Tree Removal – Austrins Family Dentistry and under Adjournment.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski moved approval of the November 2, 2021 Committee Minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

F. NEW BUSINESS

Verburg Park and Kalamazoo River – Tree Removals – Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals at Verburg Park and the Kalamazoo River by Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

Prior to the meeting, Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. provided a document that included the project narrative, restoration plans, photos, and site plans where they plan to remove trees in Verburg Park and the Kalamazoo River.

Mr. Chase Gerbig, with Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc., stated they are presenting this request on behalf of Georgia-Pacific and International Paper Company. They are requesting to remove and trim trees to facilitate remediation of sediment in Verburg Park Pond and the Kalamazoo River. Mr. Gerbig explained to the Committee these areas have contaminated sediments in the river. They are contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). This can impact the fish which can impact other ecological receptors including human receptors. It is their goal to remove the most significant contamination mass in Area 1 (the most upstream portion of the river). They will be working in the portion of the river from Gull Road down to a small area in Parchment, which is a couple mile stretch of the river. There will be areas of the river, over the next ten years or more, that will need to be remediated. He stated this scope of the work is a three-year project. Verburg Park Pond is one of the areas where they will be doing the remediation work. To accomplish this remediation work, they will be dredging the sediment out of the river and managing it in the upland area, adding stabilizing agents before sending it to a landfill.

Mr. Gerbig stated they are asking to clear trees for two purposes; 1) to establish a managing area where they will process the sediment material and, 2) to maximize the removal of the sediment along the banks of the river. He stated they do not know which trees will need to be removed but they do know the areas where they will be working. He stated they are asking for approval of which areas they can work and then later give an inventory of the trees that will need to be removed.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if they would be providing a list of trees removed prior to the work. Mr. Gerbig stated it would happen simultaneously and they would provide a list of trees as they plan to take them out. Committee Chair Ladd asked if they intend to replace one for one for each tree taken out. Mr. Gerbig stated that is correct.

Mr. Chad Robinson, with Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc., reviewed the maps noting where the dredging work would be done. There will be sealed containment pad where the sediment will be stockpiled and processed prior to transporting to a landfill. Once they are done dredging, they will then sand backfill and work on restoration elements.

Due to the endangered Indiana Bat species and their nesting season, Mr. Robinson noted they need to remove trees by March 31, 2022. This work needs to begin this winter. They intend to do an inventory, mark which trees need to be removed, and then do the removal. This would include trees around the pond and in the staging areas. He noted they do not have a remedial contractor selected

yet. Once the dredging work is completed, they will begin the restoration. They will be replanting one for one, seeding, shrubs as shown in Attachment B of their submitted documents.

Mr. Gerbig noted they will be working with the City of Kalamazoo Parks Department for proper replanting locations. Mr. Robinson stated they worked with the Kalamazoo Nature Center to develop the list of replacement trees and shrubs. These are species that are native to the environment. He noted they are open to any suggested changes to the list.

Mr. Gerbig stated they plan to remove as little as possible. They plan is to leave tree root bulbs where there will be no sheeting to stabilize the shoreline. Committee Chair Ladd stated he wanted to be sure bank stabilization was taken into consideration with the restoration plan. Mr. Gerbig stated where there is sheet piling, they will be backfilling back up to a grade that maintains a stable bank on the other side of the sheet piling. A diagram of the restoration details is included in Attachment B of the submitted documents.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he is concerned with after the removal of the trees, how it will affect the temperature of the water and how it will affect the eco system. Mr. Gerbig stated they will not be clear cutting the shoreline but will be selecting individual trees that need to be removed.

Committee Member Walter asked if there were options for the staging area to be done in an area where there are no trees such as a parking lot. Mr. Gerbig stated their plan is the least invasive approach. They do not want to use areas where there is significant overhead and underground utilities. Additionally, they do not want to process sediment too close to residential areas or in a flood plain. The closer you get to Verburg Park Pond the more you get into the flood plain.

Committee Member LaBelle stated in the document provided, in Section 3.4. E, it stated they will give a one-year guarantee. He asked that they increase the guarantee to two-years and include watering of the trees. Committee Chair Ladd asked about the 70% threshold and how would that be determined. Mr. Gerbig stated they would work with the City to make that determination before they pushed it to the contractor to address. Committee Chair Ladd stated if the two-year maintenance is acceptable then perhaps, they could schedule a walk through in two years from planting. Mr. Gerbig stated they would be happy to do that with the City.

Committee Member Walter stated major trees have a significant impact than do saplings. Replacement ratio is usually two for one and she asked why they are replacing one for one on this project. Mr. Gerbig responded the density of the trees adjacent to the bank is very high, so if they were to replace more than one for one than they would exceed the density expectation of the ordinance. With respect to the park, the trees that are not on the shoreline, it is their plan to replace the trees as to not massively change the park. Additionally, if the Park Department would like them to put in a few extra trees, they would do that with their direction.

Committee Chair Ladd stated he agreed with both Committee Member Walter and Mr. Gerbig. He stated the site has challenges and they should not replant in the same location with the same density as before. He added this is the Parks and Recs property and the Tree Committee does not make decisions for what happens on their property. Committee Chair Ladd suggested for the loss of larger trees, replacing with 2"-3" caliper sapling and replacing additional tree in nearby right of way areas. Mr. Gerbig stated they would agree to replacing one to one and planting them where the City and Parks and Rec recommend.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if they would agree to the following: a two-year guarantee of the trees; do a walk through in two years and evaluate the condition of the trees; replacing two for one with the understanding that only one tree will be replanted on the property and the other tree, being the

responsibility of the City of Kalamazoo with regards to placement and planting, will be planted in a nearby right of way space. Committee Member LaBelle stated he agreed with this. Mr. Gerbig asked if the Committee would like the document revised and resent. Committee Chair stated yes, and since minutes are being recorded, they would make a motion today for their request and look to receive the revised document later.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to approve the removal of the trees with the following requirements: knowing what trees will be removed; a two-year guarantee of the trees; do a walk through in two years and evaluate the condition of the trees; replacing two for one with the understanding that only one tree will be replanted on the property and the other tree, being the responsibility of the City of Kalamazoo with regards to placement and planting, will be planted in a nearby right of way space. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

105 Walbridge Street – Tree Trim or Removal – Adams Outdoor

Committee Chair Ladd stated he is going to table this item. He noted there are some pending questions as to whether or not the trees at this location are in the City Right of Way and within the jurisdiction of the Tree Committee.

G. OLD BUSINESS

Bank Street Realignment Project – Tree Species

Committee Chair Ladd stated they have the landscaping plans for the site, and they have been having conversations with the consultant. They will have an update in the months to come. With winter coming they will not be actively doing anything for several months. They plan to plant trees on the eastern side of Bank Street on City property. The intent is to plant as many trees as possible.

H. ACTION ITEMS

Committee Chair Ladd stated they have an action item that will be added to next month's agenda.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Committee Member LaBelle stated the tree planting contract will begin in a couple of days. They will be planting 300 trees throughout the City. Committee Chair Ladd stated the contractor is Twin Lakes Nursery. This is the second year they have won the bid. Last year they planted 100 trees. Being able to plant 300 trees this year is something to celebrate. He stated they have another late spring planting project planned that will go out to bid in late winter.

Committee Member Walter asked about the status of the Tree Inventory Project. Committee Member LaBelle stated it has been completed, the report will be done in the next couple weeks. Committee Chair Ladd stated part of the project was for them to submit a recommended long-term management plan to the City. He suggested having Davey Resource Group do a presentation to the Committee.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Ladd supported by Committee Member LaBelle, made a motion to adjourn the Tree Committee meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Submitted by: Kevin Rutherford Date: 1-4-2022
Recording Secretary

Approved by: [Signature] Date: 1/4/2022
Staff Liaison

