

**City of Kalamazoo  
TREE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
July 5, 2022**

Water Reclamation/Wastewater Treatment Facility  
1415 N. Harrison, Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
Conference Room: WREC A

Members  
Present:

Anthony Ladd, Public Works Division Manager, COK  
Patrick McVerry, Deputy Director - Parks & Recreation, COK  
Steve Skalski, Water Superintendent & Asst. City Engineer, COK  
Gail Walter, Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC)  
Brian LaBelle, Forestry Supervisor, COK

Absent: Erik Injerd, Forester, Consumers Energy

City Staff: Alice Rowe, Recording Secretary

Guests: James Director Baker, Public Services Director, COK  
Paul Harvey, Project Manager, Wightman  
Tom Palumbo, Sr. Civil Engineer, COK  
Anna Crandall, Assistant City Engineer, COK

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Ladd called the Tree Committee Meeting on July 5, 2022, at 2:05 pm

**B. ROLL CALL**

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

**C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Committee Chair Ladd introduced the following guests: James Director Baker, COK, Paul Harvey, Wightman, Tom Palumbo, COK, and Anna Crandall, COK

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (July 5, 2022)**

**Committee Member Skalski, supported by Committee Member LaBelle, moved approval of July 5, 2022, Tree Committee Agenda minus agenda item 1720 N. Church Street. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (March 23, 2022)**

**Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member McVerry, moved approval of February 23, 2022, Tree Committee Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

**Angling Road Project – Tree Removal – Tom Palumbo, COK**

Tom gave an overview of the need for multiple improvements along Angling Road, pretty much the whole section of Angling Road that is under the jurisdiction of COK, from Merryview Drive to Oakland Drive. The biggest part of this project is two culverts on Portage Creek, west fork, which are deteriorating and require replacement. One of them is a 48" pipe, the other is a larger pipe than that. The larger one will be reconstructed as a box culvert. There is a lot of flooding on that stretch of the road and puddles often cover the entire roadway. All trees in this area were surveyed and Wightman has designed it to keep tree removals to a minimum. There are a total of nine (9) trees that are designated for removal, and they are specified on the table provided in the meeting packet. Also included in the design are the installations of storms, sewers, drainage, and ditches. The plan is to remove nine (9) trees with a tentative start in one month. Paul Harvey stated that the project should begin in late August and not later than early fall. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd asked Committee Member LaBelle if he has been to the location and inspected the trees. LaBelle stated he was there and, for the most part, most of these trees are disturbance trees and unkempt. Committee Chair Ladd asked what would have led to their poor condition and LaBelle responded that this is a high-water area which is probably not good for them. The species are trees that have grown without planting; they found an area and sprouted on their own. Committee Member, Walter asked about the two (2) Oaks that are more than 20" and why they need to be removed as they are not near the culverts. Paul Harvey, Wightman, responded that in that stretch they are adding HMA gutter and in the other sections they are doing swales that are off the road. It will be about a 2' ditch, the valley gutter ends and flows into the swales and they are cutting a foot of dirt right where those trees are located. If you cut more than 6' or so of the root system, it is hard for those trees to survive. Just staying within the right of way, it is going to be impossible to cut around those trees and save them. Some requirements specify how long water is supposed to stay within a curb line and that is how they picked where it should discharge into the swale. Committee Member Walters asked if there is an option to put the swale on the other side of the road in that section. Harvey responded that there are four or five driveways, and they would have to get under them, which would cause more complications. The least impact would be to put it on the south side of the road. There are also trees on the north side of the road. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd asked for input on what area would be suitable for replacements. Tom stated that on Angling there is one lot that is owned by the city that could be a potential. The best option is a lot on Sun Valley Drive which is on Angling, the city owns this lot, and it has wetland on it, and is near this project, with similar environmental environments. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd suggested, at a minimum, to replace at a 2-1 ratio, and that we put these plantings in this fall. Discussion ensued. Committee Member Labelle recommended that we choose a species that can thrive in the swampy environment and have the option to plant shade-tolerant trees to plant under larger trees. Discussion ensued. Committee Member Walter suggested that we use a 3-1 replacement ratio to compensate for the loss. Committee

Chair Ladd added that we expand the range of where these trees can be planted to increase tree species options since space is limited in this area. Right tree, right place.

**Committee Member Skalski made a motion to approve the removal of the trees on the list and replace them at a 3-1 ratio with species of trees to be selected, at a later date, that would be tolerant to the conditions. Plantings will be completed in the Fall. Supported by Committee Member LaBelle, passed unanimously.**

**3101 E. Michigan, Water Station Pump #5 Reconstruction Project – Anna Crandall**

Anna Crandall, COK stated that we are building a new water plant for the treatment of Iron and Pfos. This site is adjoined to the leaf and brush dump site. The building will be 12,000 sq. feet and process 1,400 gallons per minute. The tree clearing is proposed to be in phases. Phase 1 is the initial clearing to perform soil borings for foundation design, the rest of the clearing will occur with site work. There are approximately 370 trees that need to be removed, this project is necessary for public health and safe drinking water. There is no open space available on the site to replace the trees. Committee Chair Ladd directed the participants to the list of trees that is in their meeting packets, and that at the end of the list is a summary by size and type of tree. There is also a plan sheet with the trees allocated to be removed in red. He also pointed out the proposed driveway and treatment plant location. Discussion ensued.

Director James Baker, COK explained that he was here to support the program and the safe drinking water this facility will provide for the community. Director Baker explained the history of the property, and what it has been used for in the past. The city has had a pump station on this site, originally in 1914 and then the surrounding land opportunities became available, and the city took advantage of those opportunities. The properties are designated for unoccupied industries to be utilized for water and wastewater. The site is forested, but that was not intentional, it is not a park or city right of way; it became forested naturally. Director Baker referenced a 1946 aerial that showed operating celery farms and the other areas were kept neat and mowed. Over this time a lot of trees have grown naturally. The exact count of trees for removal is 370. Of those 293 are less than 12". Of these 370 trees only 25 of them are in the 18-36" range, which would put them in the range of 50-75 years of age. Director Baker reiterated that this is not a park, and this is not a right of way. The city did not go out and initially purchase this property to make a forest, this property's use and its intent were to be used in support of water and wastewater utilities.

Director Baker continues that we have a major, major need to restore some hydraulic capacity within the water system. Before 2015, we had 18 source stations and about 99 wells. Then regulations started to change in terms of how we utilize some of our stations and what kinds of treatments we must have in place. We must have full-scale treatments in every one of our stations; in the past, we were allowed to turn some stations on in the summer to meet some bare basic hydraulic standards, such as for fire flow, irrigations, or something of that nature. That ability has been taken away from us. Any water that we put into the system must meet every criterion for drinking water standard, and that is as it should be. We see our hydraulic demands go from 15-16M gallons per day in the winter up to 35-38, all the way up to 46M gallons per day in the summer. We will triple the demands on the system on a summer day versus an average winter day and our pass ability to turn on a station quickly is

not there any longer. In 2018 Pfos was discovered in Kalamazoo, and we were in a Pfos crisis. This group came together to support Parchment as well, and we have helped the community in terms of water and Pfos contamination. We also have some risks, and we have some constraints with our system now. Our system is hydraulically limited. We've taken source stations, such as 17 and 18, and we have taken them completely out of our operation. We cannot run those systems until we restore our capacity. So, what this project looks to do is to put treatment in place so that we can run base-load capacity, which is capacity that is just going to run in the background every day to meet the demands in this district, and once these districts demands are met, it is going to bleed-down or boost-up that water level district. What we can do then is start to restore some of this hydraulic capacity that has challenged us. This station will be state-of-the-art with all Pfos treatment in place as well as iron and manganese removal to meet EPA regulations, as well as ascetics. Some very bold moves within the water department to focus on community health and restore the capacity of the system that has been lost really in changing regulations. The regulations are here to help support the public, so these are all great things that we are doing, but it is just a little bit of an uphill lift that we've got to go forward to get there. Another thing, and we haven't talked about it yet, but as we start to talk about the compensation package for replacement trees, that this would come from the water department and that is paid by ratepayers and so every dollar that we are spending on replacement trees is a dollar we are not spending on restoring hydraulic capacity or treatment of lead services replacement. Our safe community goals and goals for the water department are the same as what everyone else has, the dollars within the water department are best focused on lead, health, and safety, and some of these other focuses. We are not trying to advocate away from trees, I am just saying that within the water department, dollars are best used for resources to get after our safe community goals as it applies directly to the water department. Discussion ensued.

Much of the discussion was focused on the location of the new station and if this current planned location is the best site. Anna Crandall addressed this by stating that after reviewing the area and the ability to meet state regulations, the specified site is the best location for the new station. The driveway needs to be where it is planned because of the weight of the deliveries that will be coming into this station; Schippers was not built for these types of loads, we must have our main drive on Michigan. This station will be taking deliveries of all chemicals and equipment, as needed to support the operation for maintenance. Committee Chair Ladd asked if the Committee had any questions. Committee Member Walter stated that she noticed the roadway to the proposed plant site why are there trees marked in red to the North of the station site and wondered about the necessity of taking out the trees in that area. Anna explained that there is going to be a stormwater retention pond there because we are required by city standards to hold stormwater onsite, and so that was the only location to place it. There is also a county drain along Schippers that they are not allowed to discharge to. So those trees are being removed for stormwater, as well as a secondary emergency access drive. North of the plant where there are trees in red, North of the property line, those trees are being removed to make the grades work out on site.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if there is any reconsideration or a second look to see if there is any possible way that so many trees do not have to be removed. Anna responded that they moved the building around the site multiple times, not only looking at trees, but other features of the site to try to minimize the impact and, based on the size the plant needs to be,

this location is the best spot. Anna continued, so, I mentioned that the initial design capacity of the station is 1400 gallons per minute, but we are also keeping in mind potential future addition to this station to have it be a 2800 per gallon treatment plant. So, if we were to have the building further west on the site, there just is no space with the county drain and different grades out there and ultimately, we would be coming this far eventually. Committee Chair Ladd stated that he understands that this is the full request and that the water department did not want to incrementally bring this to the tree committee. Anna confirmed that is correct.

Committee Chair Ladd then asked the committee if there were any other thoughts, questions, or concerns. Committee Chair Ladd supported Director Baker's statement that whether this canopy was here for intended purposes or not, that it was acquired by the city, and that over time these trees were self-populated on this property. Committee Member Skalski asked if there are any plantings in the plan. Anna responded that they are working on the landscape plan and on what is going to go back and that it is not near what is going to need to be removed. The schedule for the replanting is not ready. Committee Member Skalski asked if she had a number on how many plantings they are thinking about for the landscape. Anna responded approximately 50.

Committee Member Walter asked if there are any grant monies or funding that might be available. While she agrees with the need for public safety and that we do not want to take dollars away from the importance of maintaining human health, and even though the trees are not a public park and the trees have simply self-populated, they do provide a lot of ecological services and benefits to people. She asked if there are any creative ways to get the funding for the replacement trees so that it doesn't have to come out of the water department's budget. Committee Member Skalski stated that the city did apply for a grant for this project but was denied because it did not score high enough on the list for the allotted money that the state was giving out on a C2R2 and that they have attempted to find funding elsewhere. Committee Chair Ladd stated that they have looked elsewhere for funds and that there are none identified at this time. Committee Chair Ladd asked Anna what the timeline is. Anna responded that they need to do soil borings for foundation design, and they need to remove trees for that asap, with site clearing fall/winter of this year. This project has a two-year construction schedule, possibly longer depending on material availability. Tree plantings are planned to occur between 2025 and 2026, potentially. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd asked for thoughts, concerns, or suggestions. Committee Member LaBelle stated they could figure out a way to find out how much the wood from the trees being removed will be worth. Committee Chair Ladd stated there are third-party companies that they have had experience with them in the past. Discussion ensued. Director Baker suggested that Committee Member LaBelle could get a timber buyer to come in and appraise the trees that will be removed and the possibility of using that money to plant new trees. Discussion ensued.

Director Baker then suggested that someone could speak with SW Michigan Land Conservation and that we could re-establish some of those contacts to possibly get some numbers. He also stated that this should be done separately from the contract for the station build. Committee Chair Ladd stated that they could help with that and added that the benefits coming from this station weigh heavily and affect a large area of residents and their quality

of life and that we need to move forward so we do not delay the boring work that needs to happen so that we are not holding this project up and then we can schedule with a tree assessor, forester or evaluator and revisit this in one month. Discussion ensued.

**Committee Member Skalski made a motion for the approval to remove 370 trees with a summary of plantings for the site to be determined, at a later date, and an evaluation of the value of the trees being removed to be determined later by a forester through a logging contract, and the funds received will be dedicated to tree initiatives. Second by Committee Member Labelle. Passed unanimously.**

Committee Chair Ladd announced this concludes New Business for today and we now move on to Old Business.

#### **G. OLD BUSINESS**

Committee Chair Ladd stated there is no Old Business for today.

#### **H. ACTION ITEMS**

Committee Chair Ladd stated they wanted to make themselves accountable for the actions that have been made by the Committee. He explained we set calendar dates for when the actions are made so a year from then we can review and make sure the work has been completed or followed up as needed. The following is a list of action items that Brian LaBelle has provided reports for.

- a. Action Item from 9/1/20 - 448 Burdick St - Gospel Mission
  - i. Brian Labelle reports: I will have to do more research
- b. Action Item from 10/6/20 - Blakeslee Tank – COK
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: The tree has not been removed and the trees have not been planted.
- c. Action Item from 10/28/20 - MDOT I-94 Project
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: I will follow up on this project.
- d. Action Item from 1/12/21 - 268 E Alcott Street - Tree Removal - Tetra Tech
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: This has been completed.
- e. Action Item from 1/12/21 - 400 Rose Street - Phase 2 - Tree Removal – AVB
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: This has been completed.
- f. Action Item from 4/6/21 - 303 Balch Ave - Tree Plantings - Intersect-Studio
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: This has been completed.
- g. Action Item from 4/6/21 - Haymarket Plaza - Tree Removal – Treystar
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Trees have been removed. Planting of four trees needs to be done.
- h. Action Item from 4/6/21 - Parkview Avenue Project - Tree Removals – COK
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Project started this year. The tree has not been removed.
- i. Action Item from 5/4/21 - New Edison School on Lake & Russell (entire block)–TowerPinkster
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Trees have not been removed. He will follow up.

- j. Action Item from 6/1/21 – 1151 Royce Ave – Joshua Sortland
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: I will follow up on this
- k. Action Item from 7/6/21 – 100 W Michigan Ave – Hurley & Stewart
  - i. Trees have been planted – this has been completed.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

Committee Chair Ladd stated that we did award a Spring Tree planting for 100 trees, however, due to the time of year, there was only a single bidder, and it was decided to allow them some time on that contract and those trees will be planted in the fall. Secondly, the hazardous tree removal project has begun for the year and was referred to Committee Member LaBelle as to the count. Committee Member LaBelle stated that it is around eight (8). Committee Chair Ladd stated that is where it stands right now, but we are trying to find more funding to increase the amount. One of the things that came out of our tree inventory is the number of trees that need to be removed in short order. There was an array of good, fair, and poor-quality of trees and there were a tremendous number of trees that are in poor health, and we are trying to chip away at that. Every time we do this, we are improving the overall quality of our canopy and creating new planting space. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd announced that we will also be opening bids for our tree maintenance program this year, which is like what we have done in the past and that we had a successful program last year, but what we have done is, we have taken that tree inventory data and divided the city into zones. The hope is that with sustained funding, over multiple years, we can get into a rotation where we are touching every tree at least once every 10 years. Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Ladd provided an update for the Adams Advertising item that came to the Committee a couple of months ago. This property was under the control of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and we were requested to make a recommendation to the DDA and we made a recommendation of trimming. We also made a recommendation of what the requirement if removal were necessary or desired after their numerous conversations, they have ultimately decided to remove those trees and we will be providing locations for the 5-1 replacement ratio and species requirements. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member Walters asked what the status of the revisions of the Tree Ordinance is. Committee Chair Ladd stated that we want to update the Tree Ordinance and create a reference document that the ordinance will reference. There have been recent conversations with Committee Member LaBelle and Ladd stated that he would like to investigate a DNR grant to get money to have a consultant come on board and meet with the Committee to revamp that ordinance. Ladd does not feel that it needs a complete overhaul and when he dug into it there was a lot that was good in the ordinance. This is a good opportunity to enhance what is already good. Walters then asked what the timeline is for that, and Ladd responded that he sent our Grant Specialist, Carrie Williams, an email last week asking about that, and Ladd believes that the application is in the Fall. Ladd would also like the Committee to find opportunities for the community to volunteer, i.e., ROW adopt a tree program and there are so many more things we can do to better this ordinance and make it readily available to contractors, consultants, developers, private residents, and community groups. Ladd added that they

are seeing the benefits of doing that with our streets and code enforcement and believe we will have similar results by revising this ordinance and making it readily available.


Committee Member Walters then mentioned the trees that were going to be planted in the spring are now going to be planted in the fall, the 100 trees, is that going to be it for the year or are there going to be more trees? Committee Chair Ladd responded there were 300 more besides that so approximately 400 total. Ladd added that with other plantings, he believes we will hit our goal of 500 trees this year. Walters then asked, regarding residential ROW plantings, if we notify the residents before the planting and that there are some choices of the tree selection which they can state their preference. Ladd responded that since it goes out to so many different locations, the postcard directs them to a website to the tree map that designates their planting space of small, medium, or large, and then it has the species available of what it could be based on the size and location. Discussion ensued.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Committee Member Skalski made a motion to adjourn the Tree Committee meeting, supported by Committee Member LaBelle. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 P.M.**

Submitted by:   
Recording Secretary

Date: 8.5.22

Approved by:   
Staff Liaison

Date: 8/5/2022