

**City of Kalamazoo
TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes
March 11, 2022**

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

Members

Present: Erik Injerd, Forester, Consumers Energy
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)

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Andrea Augustine, Adams Outdoors
Laurie Davis, Hurley & Stewart
Kelsey Harness, Resident
Kylie Robinson, Adams Outdoor
Garrett Seybert, P. S. Equities

A. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Ladd called the Tree Committee Meeting of March 11, 2022, to order at 9:00 a.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 the following guests:

- Andrea Augustine, Adams Outdoors
- Laurie Davis, Hurley & Stewart
- Kelsey Harness, Resident
- Kylie Robinson, Adams Outdoor
- Garrett Seybert, P. S. Equities

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (March 11, 2022)

Committee Member McVerry supported by Committee Member Skalski, moved approval of the March 11, 2022, Tree Committee Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (February 23, 2022)

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

F. NEW BUSINESS

530 Rose Street – Tree Removal – Hurley & Stewart

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removal request at 530 Rose Street by Hurley & Stewart.

Ms. Lauri Davis, with Hurley and Stewart, stated their client is preparing plans for a five-story residential building at 530 Rose Street. The building sets five feet from the property line. Within the right of way there is a 22" America Linden tree. There is less than ten feet between the proposed building face and the trunk of the tree. The contractors plan to use a crane for construction and the tree will obstruct the safe operation of the crane for the construction of the building. She stated they are requesting removal of the tree and replace with two scarlet oaks.

Committee Chair Ladd stated he would like to see at least three replacement plantings in the area. A discussion followed regarding replanting placement.

Committee Chair Ladd asked what the timeframe is for the development of the project. Mr. Garrett Seybert, with Hurley & Stewart, stated they were looking to break ground in August.

Committee Member Skalski stated the tree is healthy, but it is impacting the sidewalk. The roots are pushing up the sidewalk and there are site constraints for the growth of the tree. He stated he is agreeable for a three for one replacement. Committee Chair Ladd suggested planting four smaller trees, evenly spaced, on the lot for aesthetic purposes. Ms. Davis replied the developers have a one drive access into the property and would like to keep their options open for a possible future second drive going out. They do not want to block this area with a tree. She stated the area would support the planting of three smaller trees, evenly spaced, in the front of the building.

Committee Member Skalski stated directly across the street there appears to be a vacant area where there are no trees. There appears to be one overhead utility line that runs to the north. Trees could potentially be planted there, although he does not know if there are any underground utilities.

Committee Member Walter suggested planting native species. She stated when she has talked to the City Forester about planting trees in the tree lawn, he prefers to plant medium size trees where appropriate. Committee Chair Ladd stated we do not have to decide on the tree species today. He stated he would email Ms. Davis a list of allowable trees species that will include the growth size of the trees - small, medium, and large. He asked her to propose the species and we will approve the species at that time. He stated since our City Forester is working nights, it is easier to communicate with him by email.

Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to allow the removal of the tree and replanting three, small to medium size trees, on the property and one medium to large tree planted across the street. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

105 Walbridge Street – Tree Trim or Removal – Adams Outdoor

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree trim or removal request at 105 Walbridge Street by Adams Outdoor.

Ms. Andrea Augustine, of Adams Outdoor, stated the property is owned by the DDA. Previously, when they presented the request to the Committee, it was made clear this property was not City owned property and the Committee sent them to Downtown Partnership. As they worked with the Downtown Partnership, they were informed Downtown Partnership does not deal with this and sent them back to the City. She stated she eventually spoke with Jeff Chamberlain, who suggested the request come before the Committee for recommendation to the DDA and final decision being made by the DDA. She stated the trees have grown to the point where the billboard is no longer viewable. This results in significant loss of income for them. They are requesting to remove the trees and replace them. Ms. Augustine stated they are open to a 5 to 1 replacement. If removal is not possible then she would recommend trimming. She noted they have worked with Tree Works in the past and would work with them to do the removal or trimming.

Committee Member Walter stated when the gateway was put in, it was to provide an aesthetic welcoming gateway into the City from the east. She stated she went to the site, took some pictures, and noted the billboard is very large and dominates the skyline. As you drive in and approach the downtown area, the billboard is very visible for a long distance. Ms. Augustine stated the issue is not seeing the billboard from a distance but from close up. In the winter, with the leaves off, you can see the billboard. In the summer, when the leaves are on the trees, they cover the entire bottom half of the billboard. Ms. Augustine stated the viewable distance traveling at 35 miles per hour is only in the 300 feet range. With the leaves on in the summer it has gotten to the point where it is directly affecting the visibility of the sign causing it to be unreadable.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if it was four trees they were concerned with. Ms. Augustine replied yes.

Committee Chair Ladd confirmed the property is owned by DDA but is maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Committee Member McVerry noted over the past five years the trees have been detrimental to the fountain. They have had substantial issues with the pump in the fountain due to branches falling into it as well as the leaves and other debris. He explained this debris sits in the fountain and clogs the jets.

Committee Chair Ladd stated, for full disclosure and in their very preliminary discussion for design plans for two-way streets, this area is probably the most complicated part of the entire project to bring these two roads together. Currently, there are no plans to do anything in this area but to relocate or re-envision this gateway into the City is a possibility. Whatever is decided today, we could potentially be back here in two or three years with a similar request. He stated that this

information is strictly for full disclosure. He added they are hoping the design for Michigan Avenue will start next year.

Committee Member Walter questioned how you rate the value of these features. You have medium aged and medium sized burr oaks trees, a fountain, and advertising. What do you want the message to be as you come into the city? Do you want it to be a welcoming gateway or advertising? She noted there are a total of four different billboards in this area as you approach the city.

Committee Member Injerd stated he agrees with Committee Member Walter and noted the trees are healthy. Aesthetically he feels the trees are more important to the area than the signage.

Committee Chair Ladd stated trimming was a request. Committee Member Skalski stated as time goes on and trimming continues, the trimming will cause the trees to not appear as nice.

Ms. Augustine suggested since the street design will be happening in a few years, trimming the trees for now and revisiting removal later when the street design takes effect may be the option to take.

Ms. Augustine stated she would propose to trim the trees and have Tree Works speak with City and decide the best way to trim the trees. She noted they are willing to pay for the trimming costs. Committee Chair Ladd stated since the City likes to trim City trees, they would meet together with the City Forester, Brian LaBelle, to discuss this further.

Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member Injerd, made a motion to recommend the City work with Adams Outdoor to trim the trees to a level that is safe for the trees and best for the sign. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Rescheduling of the April 5, 2022, 2:00 P.M., Tree Committee Meeting to April 19, 2022 at 10:00A.M. – Anthony Ladd

Committee Chair Ladd asked for a motion to allow the monthly Tree Committee Meeting scheduled for April 5, 2022, at 2:00 P.M. to be rescheduled to April 19, 2022, at 10:00 A.M.

Committee Member Walter stated she has another meeting scheduled at that time and could not attend at that time. Committee Chair Ladd suggested moving the time to 3:00 P.M.

Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to allow the monthly Tree Committee Meeting scheduled for April 5, 2022, at 2:00 P.M. to be rescheduled to April 19, 2022, at 3:00 P.M. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

G. OLD BUSINESS

None.

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. Decision Follow Up from 9/1/20 - 448 Burdick St - Gospel Mission
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: I will have to do more research.
- b. Decision Follow Up from 9/1/20 - Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Park - COK
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: 10 Hawthorne Trees along with 10 crabapples were planted in MLK park. The hawthorns have tree guards on them.
- c. Decision Follow Up from 10/6/20 - 1415 N. Harrison - KWRP Biofilter- COK
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: The trees were removed, and we received the money from the trees removed.
- d. Decision Follow Up from 10/6/20 - Blakeslee Tank – COK
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: The tree has not been removed yet and the trees have not been planted yet.
- e. Decision Follow Up from 10/6/20 - Winchell Citizen Planting Project - Rebeca Dale
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Over 60 trees were planted in the Winchell Neighborhood. With guarantee and watering from Mulders.
- f. Decision Follow Up from 10/6/20 - 418 Stuart Ave - Dave Engerer
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Tree was pruned by a private contractor with supervision from Forestry Supervisor.
- g. Decision Follow Up from 10/28/20 - MDOT I-94 Project
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: I don't have anything to follow-up on this project.
- h. Decision Follow Up from 12/1/20 - Prairie Ave between W. North St and Blakeslee St – Consumers Energy
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: We didn't need to remove any sizable trees and we pruned the lines that were planted.
- i. Decision Follow Up from 1/12/21 - 268 E Alcott Street - Tree Removal - Tetra Tech
 - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Project hasn't begun yet and trees have not been removed.
- j. Decision Follow Up from 1/12/21 - 400 Rose Street - Phase 2 - Tree Removal – avb

- i. Brian LaBelle reports: Project hasn't begun yet and trees have not been removed.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kelsey Harness, resident of 410 Elm Street, stated on June 19, 2020, the City cut down a large tree in front of her home. The stump was not removed. She stated she called and asked about the removal of the stump and replanting of another tree. Due to the small frontage size of the property, the stump does affect the curb appeal of her home. When looking at the house all you see is the stump. She is requesting removal of the stump and planting of another tree.

Committee Chair Ladd stated we will have the stump removed within a month. He noted if they can get a tree planted, they will do it, but could not say when that will happen.

J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Committee Chair Ladd stated we are working on a spring planting project. We will be planting 200 trees in the Edison and Northside Neighborhoods.

Committee Chair Ladd stated they are working with the adjacent property owner to confirm they are agreeable to the planting. Postcards are being mailed later this month to the residents to notify them the City will be planting a tree next to their property. There is a place on the postcard to give feedback. If they decide they do not want a tree, they can note that on the card.

Committee Chair Ladd stated he is trying to put together some sort of Arbor Day celebration. He doesn't know what that will look like yet. He stated ideally, he would like to give away trees that are not your typical Arbor Day sapling but something more substantial.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Ladd supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to adjourn the Tree Committee meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Submitted by: *Karen Ruthergard* Date: 7-18-22
Recording Secretary

Approved by: *MCC* Date: 7/18/2022
Staff Liaison