

**City of Kalamazoo  
TREE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
May 4, 2021**

Electronic Meeting

Members

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

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Laura Kloosterman - TowerPinkster

**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:  
- Laura Kloosterman - TowerPinkster

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

By unanimous consent the Committee adopted its meeting agenda as presented.

**E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 6, 2021)**

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

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **G. OLD BUSINESS**

### **New Edison School – Tree Removal - TowerPinkster**

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for tree removals at the new Edison School. He noted Ms. Laura Kloosterman, with TowerPinkster, presented her request for tree removal at last month's meeting. The Committee was looking for clarification on tree planting locations and proposed tree species.

Ms. Kloosterman reviewed her proposal and noted there are three trees that need removed. Two of the trees are on Jackson Street and one tree is on Russell Street. The trees are blocking the exits of the proposed site plan. She stated there are overhead lines on the four streets surrounding the property as well as underground utilities.

Ms. Kloosterman proposed planting seven ornamental trees whose growth will stay under the overhead lines. They will plant one on Jackson, three along Russell, and three along Lake. They plan to plant additional trees on the site. A list of tree species was presented.

Committee Member LaBelle asked for confirmation that they plan to remove three trees and plant seven trees being hawthorns and crabapples. Ms. Kloosterman responded yes.

**Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to approve the removal the three trees and plant seven replacement trees. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **Bank Street Realignment Project – Tree Species**

Committee Chair Ladd stated the pre-construction meeting was held last month. He was not able to attend the entire meeting and he does not have any updates at this time. He hopes to have an update next month. He noted they want to add new plantings in the northern most side of the property next to Bank Street.

Committee Member Walter asked if there was a list of tree planting species for the site. Committee Chair Ladd stated there is an existing plan and he would send the list to her.

## **H. ACTION ITEMS**

None.

## **I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a) Tina McClinton, in a voice mail, stated she lives on Lake Street in Kalamazoo. She noted the City of Kalamazoo is planning on taking down 100 old trees on Lake Street that help with flooding. The neighborhood currently floods. They are removing the trees to put in a 77-car parking lot. There is a vacant 300-car parking lot across the street that can be used. Removing the trees will cause additional flooding.

- a. Committee Chair Ladd stated he is not aware of the project mentioned. He noted he is not aware of any City trees proposed to be removed. He added the area of influence of the Tree Committee is limited to the City Right of Way and City property. There are other avenues where these concerns can be addressed but the Tree Committee does not have any influence in this particular area.
  - b. Committee Member Skalski stated this may be the property west of Public Services and this would be covered under the site plan review process. Several other groups would be involved including EGLE, Natural Features Protections, and other groups.
- b) Jeff, in a voice mail, stated he lives in the City of Kalamazoo, and wanted to discuss the issue of tree re-planting in the Vine Neighborhood. He stated the Vine Neighborhood has had a lot of tree removals in the last few years. He spoke to Brian LaBelle and Anthony Ladd last year and was informed there is a plan to plant trees in the Vine Neighborhood pending funding. He said he is looking for an update on tree plantings for this neighborhood.

Additionally, Jeff stated he spoke to the Environment Concerns Committee about this same issue and was told the tree ordinance needs to be updated to include language about requirements for tree plantings. He stated he was not clear if this was a prerequisite for tree re-plantings in the Vine Neighborhood.

- a. Committee Chair Ladd stated they are plantings 300 trees this fall.
  - b. Committee Member LaBelle stated they plan to plant 300 trees, but they are not focusing on any particular neighborhood. They plan to plant in the Vine Neighborhood, but he does not know the number of trees to be planted there at this time. He stated they plan to plant in several neighborhoods.
  - c. Committee Member LaBelle noted individuals, neighborhoods associations, non-profit organizations, etc., are permitted to plant trees in the right-of-way. To do this, they would need to present their plan to the Tree Committee for approval. The Committee would help guide them through the process and help them to pick the right tree for the right space.
  - d. Committee Member Walter explained the topic of the ordinance was introduced by the person who is currently the chair of the ECC. At one point when the ordinance was on the Tree Committee agenda, she would be asked what went on at the Tree Committee. He remembered that and asked what the status was of the revision of the ordinance. She stated she advised the chair, along with those present, replanting trees was not contingent on revising the tree ordinance. The ordinance will get revised, but it doesn't change the activities going on in the City.
- c) Jackie Mitchell, in a voice mail, stated she lives on Egleston Street. She stated she is calling about a tree at her business at 1116 Lake Street. The tree is growing over the building and had a blue dot on it at one point. Can the tree be trimmed back so the building is safe? The tree looks like it has something attacking it.
- a. Committee Member LaBelle stated the proper avenue to report this concern is to call 311 and submit a request for an inspection. He noted they prune all City trees

according to the ordinance which is 8-ft radius around the building, 15-ft over the street, and 8-ft over the sidewalk.

**J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

Committee Member Walter asked what the best way would be to share information with the people on Tree Committee. She stated she is involved with the Urban Bird Treaty and would like to know the best way to share information. Committee Chair Ladd responded she could use the email list Karen Rutherford has used when sending meeting reminders to the Committee.

Committee Member Walter stated she saw a tree in her neighborhood with a large orange X on it. She would like to know the best way to contact someone about questions regarding trees. Committee Member LaBelle said she could contact him. Committee Chair Ladd stated going through 311 is the best way. 311 is good at gathering relevant information and organizing the concerns which helps them to prioritize the calls.

**K. . ADJOURNMENT**

**Committee Member 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 2:41 p.m.**

Submitted by: Karen Rutherford Date: 6-3-2021  
Recording Secretary

Approved by: [Signature] Date: 6/4/2021  
Staff Liaison