

**City of Kalamazoo  
TREE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
November 1, 2022**

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

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)  
Brian LaBelle, Forestry Supervisor, COK

Absent: None

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: George Waring, COK

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Ladd called the Tree Committee Meeting to order on November 1, 2022, at 2:06 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

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

**C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Chair Ladd introduced the following guest: George Waring with the City of Kalamazoo.

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (November 1, 2022)**

**Committee Member Skalski, supported by Committee Member LaBelle, moved approval of November 1, 2022, Tree Committee Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 4, 2022)**

Committee Member Skalski noted under Members Absent it indicated None, but Chair Ladd was absent for this meeting.

**Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member McVerry, moved approval of the October 4, 2022, Tree Committee Minutes, as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project – Tree Removals - COK**

Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS).

George Waring, with the City of Kalamazoo, presented site plans and a list of trees to be removed that indicated species and the size of each tree. Mr. Waring stated the SRTS for the Winchell Neighborhood involves two schools, Maple Middle School and Oakland/Winchell Elementary School. Both schools will have new additions to their pedestrian networks. For Winchell it will be the sidewalk on the south side of Winchell Avenue from Rambling to Oakland. He noted they worked with their consulting engineer, DLZ, to come up with the best route that is less impacting. However, there will need to be some tree removals as part of the project. The SRTS grant was approved this past year and funding is slated 2024. This is an MDOT project so it will need to bid out through the LAP process. With this process the timeframe is very strict, and we have to meet certain requirements. The best time to take care of trees is during the fall and winter months. We need to get approval for the tree removals now so when it goes to bid in 2023 the first action will be to do the tree removals to prepare for construction in 2024.

Mr. Waring stated most of the trees to be removed on Winchell are closer to Oakland side and Rambling side. There are not too many in the middle of Winchell. Most of the tree calipers are in the 6"-18" range. There are only two trees that are in the 19"-36" caliper range.

Mr. Waring stated they are proposing to do two for one replacement in the 6"-18" caliper range and four for one replacement for the 19"-36" caliper range. They plan to replant in the same area of the project limits as much as possible. They are still determining spacing and best locations for the replacement trees at this time. If they cannot plant in the project area, they want to keep the plantings in the Winchell Neighborhood.

Committee Member Skalski asked if they have spoken with the neighborhood. Waring stated they have spoken with each property owner who had a tree that would be affected. Everyone they have spoken to has been accepting of the project. Mr. Waring stated they tried to jog the sidewalk around as many trees as possible.

Chair Ladd asked if the replacement trees were part of the project. Mr. Waring responded the replacement trees would be part of the project. They submitted the proposed cost estimate to MDOT that included the tree plantings as part of the estimate.

Chair Ladd asked if the residents could have input on tree selection. Mr. Waring stated they have not had that conversation yet but would like to provide a list of trees for selection. Committee Member LaBelle asked about the right of way width for the tree plantings. Mr. Waring stated it varies and until they can get the final plan set, he could not say. There are some perspective plantings noted on the plans. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he could provide Mr. Waring with a list of a diversity of allowable trees. There are no overhead wires on the south side of the street. Committee Member LaBelle suggested not planting ornamental trees. Chair Ladd stated we can work with the consultant and neighborhood to plant trees. Chair Ladd stated we need to be mindful of trees species that are being planted on the corners of streets, so they do not block sight distance.

Mr. Waring stated there is a total of 13 trees being removed and replacing with 30 trees.

Chair Ladd stated he would like to see the list of replacement trees once the plan is set and would recommend adding this to the motion.

Chair Ladd noted in the plans is the City's Standard Detail which was done very well by Mr. Waring. This is detailed information that is required by the City for contractors.

Committee Member Walter asked if there was a way around not taking down a mature tree. Mr. Waring stated there were no work arounds for the trees on the list that were in the 19"-36" caliper range. For the oak trees the work being done would significantly affect the root system of the tree. After speaking with the resident on the street that have a tree, they were in favor of removal and keeping the sidewalk straight rather than weaving back and forth through the trees. Committee Member LaBelle stated the oak trees on the list are very small. He noted they are not worth replanting. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he recommends going forward with the project. The project will cover the replanting and line the entire street with trees.

Chair Ladd stated he would add that once the plan is developed that it be brought back to the Tree Committee for review.

**Committee Member Skalski supported by Committee Member LaBelle, made a motion to allow the removal of the trees with replacement two for one for the 6"-18" caliper and four for one for the 19"-36" caliper. Replacing with non-ornamentals, deep root large growth trees and to be planted in the project limits where possible. The final design is to be presented to the Tree Committee for final approval. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

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

Committee Member Walter stated, regarding the Ransom Street project that was discussed in the October meeting, she sent an email to Committee Member LaBelle and Chair Ladd asking if a couple of trees could be reconsidered. Chair Ladd stated he sent her email to the consultant, and he will follow up with her. Committee Member LaBelle stated the project has not started yet and they will have to come back to the Committee for final approval. The Committee has not agreed to any trees being removed as this time.

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

Chair Ladd stated there is an attached update for the listed Action Items that Committee Member Brian LaBelle has provided.

- a. Action Item from 9/1/20 - 448 Burdick St - Gospel Mission

- i. Brian Labelle reports: Sent email to Clay Stull with AVB on 7/15/22, with no response. He is still working on this one.
- 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: Project still in progress.
- d. 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. He needs to get them to remove another tree.
- e. Action Item from 4/6/21 - Parkview Avenue Project - Tree Removals – COK
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Project started this year. Tree has not been removed. Project has recently been completed. Discussion on the trees is forthcoming.
- f. Action Item from 5/4/21 - New Edison School on Lake and Russell (entire block) – TowerPinkster
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Trees have not been removed. He will follow up.
- g. Action Item from 6/1/21 – 1151 Royce Ave – Joshua Sortland
  - i. Brian LaBelle reports: Sent email to Joshua Sortland on 7/15/22, with no response. Brian reports he cannot get a hold of him. The tree was removed but there was no replacement planting done. Brian believes Mr. Sortland has moved.
- h. Action Item from 11/2/21 – Austrins Family Dentistry – 437 Stone St. – tree just got removed. Brian is in discussion with them regarding tree replacement.
- i. Action Item from 11/2/21 - KNHS Home Ownership – 1010 N. Rose Street – houses have not been built yet but the trees have been removed.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

Committee Member LaBelle stated tree planting started this week. They have planted about 70 trees as of now. They are planting a large variety of species including a variety of maples and oaks. They will be planting a total of 300 with the current contractor and 100 - 150 with another contractor. Chair Ladd stated this is the most trees we have ever planted in a year.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he planted over 20 trees in Haymarket Plaza which will look really good in a few years. He planted about 20 trees in the perimeter of La Crone Park.

Chair Ladd stated there was more hazardous trees removed this year than any other year. He stated we are tracking our plantings in the GIS program to keep track of these assets and the work that is being done to them. We are somewhere between 50% to 100% complete with our 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Block Pruning.

**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 2:47 P.M.**

Submitted by: Karen Rutherford Date: 1-3-2023  
Recording Secretary

Approved by: [Signature] Date: 1/3/2023  
Staff Liaison

