

**City of Kalamazoo  
TREE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
October 4, 2022**

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

Members

Present: Dave Benac, Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC)  
Erik Injerd, Forester, Consumers Energy  
Brian LaBelle, Forestry Supervisor, COK  
Patrick McVerry, Deputy Director - Parks & Recreation, COK  
Interim Chair, Steve Skalski, Water Superintendent & Asst. City Engineer, COK

Absent: Anthony Ladd, Public Works Division Manager, COK

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Brock VanDyken, Water Supervisor, COK

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Interim Chair Skalski called the Tree Committee Meeting to order on October 4, 2022, at 2:02 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

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

**C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Interim Chair Skalski introduced the following guests: Brock VanDyken with the City of Kalamazoo.

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (October 4, 2022)**

Interim Chair Skalski added to the agenda two additional New Business items:

Item c: Station 11 – Tree Removal – Brock VanDyken

Item d: 1720 N. Church Street – Tree Removal – James Baker

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

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (September 6, 2022)**

**Committee Member McVerry supported by Committee Member LaBelle, moved approval of the September 6, 2022, Tree Committee Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**D. NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Station 3 (Balch and Park) – Tree Removals – City of Kalamazoo (COK)**

Interim Chair Skalski opened discussion for the tree removals at Station 3 (Balch and Park Street).

Mr. Brock VanDyken stated there is a cluster small trees and brush surrounding the Water Pumping Station 3 located at Balch and Park Street. The trees and brush obscure the building and provide a place for homeless to hide and sleep. The homeless are storing and leaving behind trash. They are requesting removal of 4 trees.

Interim Chair Skalski noted there is a watermain project proposed on Balch Street for next year and the Water Department plans to plant replacement trees in this area. They are agreeable to replacing two for one. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he would like to plant 7-8 bald cypress at this location.

**Committee Member LaBelle, supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to allow the removal of the 4 trees and underbrush with replanting of 8 bald cypress at the site north of the area. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

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

Interim Chair Skalski recommended to table this item for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project until next month's meeting.

**Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to table the tree removals for Safe Routes to School Project until next month's meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

c. **Station 11 – Tree Removal - COK**

Interim Chair Skalski opened discussion of the tree removals at Station 11.

Mr. VanDyken stated there is one tree that is located between the transformer and next to the sand filters that needs to be removed at Station 11. The tree is too close to the filter and building requiring it to be removed. It has outgrown its space. He noted they are in the process of repairing the iron filters and will be doing some outside painting. Discussion ensued.

Interim Chair Skalski stated the tree is a 24" red pine.

**Committee Member LaBelle, supported by Committee Member McVerry, made a motion to allow removal of the tree and plant 4 red pines on the site. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

d. **1720 N. Church St. – Tree Removal - COK**

Interim Chair Skalski stated Director James Baker requested removal of a sycamore tree. As part of the N. Church Stormwater Improvement Project, they will be installing six new double inlet structures. The proposed location conflicts with the Sycamore tree that is in good condition. They evaluated several alternatives including splitting the structure, but with the underground utilities this was the best alternative. Director Baker recommends tree replacements be placed along the north side of W. Hopkins, east of N. Church, in the spring or fall of 2023.

Interim Committee Member Benac asked if we could plant across the street. Committee Member LaBelle agreed they could plant a tree in that space. There is a curblawn area where there are no trees.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he recommends planting 6 trees to replace the tree being removed. He recommends planting one directly across the street, one smaller size tree on the site, and the other four trees to be planted in the general vicinity.

**Interim Chair Skalski, supported by Committee Member LaBelle, made a motion to allow the removal of the tree with replacement 6 to 1. The replacement trees to be planted as follows: one direct across the street, one smaller size tree on the site, and the other four trees to be planted in the general vicinity. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **E. OLD BUSINESS**

Interim Chair Skalski stated there is no Old Business for today.

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

Interim Chair Skalski 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.
- 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.
- 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. This should be done soon.
- 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

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

Interim Committee Member Benac stated, on behalf of the ECC, there is some concern about the planting of Norway maples and Chinese lilac.

Committee Member LaBelle responded we do not plant Norway maple and the list that was on the MLive website is wrong. There was a notice that went out stating we were planting Norway maples, but he stated this was not true and he does not know where that notice came from.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Committee Member McVerry 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 2:40 P.M.**

Submitted by: Karen Rutherford  
Recording Secretary

Date: 11-4-2022

Approved by: [Signature]  
Staff Liaison

Date: 11/8/2022