

**City of Kalamazoo
TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes
October 3, 2023**

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

Members

Present: Erik Injerd, Forester, Consumers Energy
Brian LaBelle, Forestry Supervisor, COK
Anthony Ladd, Public Works Division Manager, COK
Tom Palumbo, Senior Civil Engineer, COK (interim member)
Gail Walter, Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC)

Absent: Patrick McVerry, Director - Parks & Recreation, COK

City Staff: Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Laura Loviska, Resident
Danielle Rhodes, Abonmarche Byce
Rodger Storteboom, - Douglas and Sons Paint

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ladd called the Tree Committee Meeting to order on October 3, 2023, at 2:012 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:

- Laura Loviska, Resident
- Danielle Rhodes, Abonmarche Byce
- Rodger Storteboom, - Douglas and Sons Paint

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (October 3, 2023)

Committee Member Labelle, supported by Committee Member Palumbo, moved approval of October 3, 2023 Tree Committee Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (September 5, 2023)

Committee Member LaBelle, supported by Committee Member Injerd, moved approval of the September 5, 2023 Tree Committee Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

F. NEW BUSINESS

a. 128 E. Frank Street – Tree Removals – Abonmarche Byce

Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals at 128 E. Frank Street.

Ms. Danielle Rhodes, with Abonmarche Byce, reviewed the site plan. She stated there are two proposed housing buildings to be built on this site. The site is currently vacant and undeveloped. The trees to be removed were highlighted on the site plan. They are requesting to remove five trees. The proposed construction to be done around the trees will not allow the trees to survive. The five tree locations are three trees along E. Frank Street and two along E. North Street. The buildings will be very close to the lot line. The proposed streetscape will be more than a one-to-one replacement ratio. These five trees highlighted on the site plan are in the City right of way.

Ms. Rhodes proposes replacement trees to be eight along E. Frank Street, 3 along N. Burdick Street, 4 along N. Edwards Street, and 2 along E. North Street. She stated they could add one more along E. North Street.

There is a second project taking place in the same area at the same time for the Senior Center. Chair Ladd stated they could wait until both sites were developed to plant around the entire block. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle requested they do not plant boxwoods. They are prone to attract lantern flies. He recommends not planting large growing trees under power lines. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle stated he would like the 23” locust tree on E. North Street to be saved, if possible.

Committee Member Injerd stated he does not object to the removal of the trees. Most have lived their extended life and one is not in the best of shape.

Ms. Rhodes stated they plan for construction to begin in the Spring of next year.

Committee Member LaBelle, supported by Committee Member Injerd, made a motion to allow the removal of the five trees. Once the building is completed, they are to return to the Tree Committee to discuss replacement planting at that time. The minimum replacement ratio will be two for one. If space does not allow for two for one ratio, then replacement plantings will be done near the project site. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

b. **231 W Cedar – Douglas and Sons Paint**

Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals at 231 W. Cedar by Douglas and Sons Paint.

Mr. Rodger Storteboom, with Douglas and Sons Paint, stated this has been an on-going issue with limbs dropping on the sidewalk. About a year ago he was told by the Forester that this would be a Consumers Energy issue. Consumers Energy came out and said there was no danger to the power, and it was not their issue. On May 15, 2023 a limb had fallen next to the van in parking space. He presented pictures of tree limb laying in the parking lot next to the Honda Mini Van that belongs to the company. He presented additional photos of limbs that had fallen. He is concerned someone will be injured or killed. He asked that the tree be trimmed or taken down. There are two trees that are of a concern but the one is worse than the other. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member LaBelle stated this is a locust and they tend to get dead limbs in the crown, with tiny limb that drop. Discussion ensued.

Chair Ladd suggested we send crews to do dead wood trimming. Special equipment will be needed due to the limbs being in the wires. Committee Member LaBelle stated they would send a crew out to prune both trees at this property.

Chair Ladd stated we will begin with the pruning and follow up with Mr. Storteboom to see how the tree is doing. Committee Member Labelle will exchange contact information with Mr. Storteboom.

c. **716 W. Kilgore Road – Laura Loviska**

Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals at 716 W. Kilgore Road.

Ms. Laura Loviska stated she has been at this address for over 2.5 years. The driveway is narrow. The cement in the back of her home is breaking up so she tries to avoid driving over it with the vehicle to prevent additional damage. She does not have the funds to replace the driveway area that is breaking up. Therefore, she has to back out of the driveway onto W. Kilgore Road. When backing out of the driveway, there is a City tree blocking her vision. She has had several close car accidents. The Forester has been to the house to inspect the tree. She is asking to have the tree removed and is willing to put in something smaller. She states this is a safety issue for her.

Chair Ladd noted the second tree on her curb lawn is in worse shape than the one next to her driveway and would also block her view as well. The Committee viewed the location on Google Maps. Discussion ensued.

Committee Member Palumbo stated the bike lane provides a buffer. The tree is causing sidewalk damage.

Committee Member LaBelle and Chair Ladd stated both trees are healthy.

Committee Member Palumbo stated safety is the concern. Chair Ladd stated there is a higher posted speed, one lane, road at this location. Committee Member Walter stated the tree is healthy. She agrees this is a safety issue.

Chair Ladd made a motion, supported by Committee Member LaBelle, to have the City Traffic Engineer investigate this issue. Ms. Loviska will not need to come back to Tree Committee. If it is determined the tree should be removed, they will replant with a tree that will not interfere with the line of site. Someone will contact her once the Traffic Engineer has investigated the location. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

G. OLD BUSINESS

- a. None

H. ACTION ITEMS

Chair Ladd reports on the following:

- a. Action Item from 9/1/20 - 448 Burdick St - Gospel Mission
 - 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
 - The tree has not been removed and the trees have not been planted.
- c. Action Item from 10/28/20 - MDOT I-94 Project
 - Project still in progress.
- d. Action Item from 4/6/21 - Parkview Avenue Project - Tree Removals – COK
 - Replacement tree to be planted this fall.
- e. Action Item from 11/2/21 – Austrins Family Dentistry – 437 Stone St. –
 - tree has been removed. Brian to contact them and get tree planted.
- f. 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. Brian to follow up.
- g. Action Item from 2/23/22 – Stadium Drive Culvert – Tree Removals and Replantings – COK
 - Brian LaBelle reports: Completed (Brian asked that this Action Item be not removed from this list yet)

- h. Action Item from 3/11/22 – 105 Walbridge Street – Trim Trees - Adams Outdoor
 - The trees were removed. Locations for plantings have been submitted. Brian reports they have contacted Mulders and Adams Outdoor and given them 20 planting sites. They should be planted fall 2023 in downtown vicinity.
- i. Action Item from 7/5/22 – 3101 E Michigan, Water Station Reconstruction Project – Tree Removals and Replanting - COK, Anna Crandall
 - Trees to be planted this fall or in the spring of 2024.
- j. Action Item from 7/5/22 – Angling Road Project – Tree Removals and Replanting – COK, Tom Palumbo
- k. Action Item from 8/2/2022 – 114, 118, and 120 Burr Oak – Tree Removals and Replanting – KNHS – Matt Milcarek
 - Trees to be planted this fall.
- l. Action Item from 8/2/2022 – 1601 and 1616 E Main Commercial Corridor Project – Tree Plantings - OCBA Landscape Architects – Rachel Hughes-Nilsson.
 - Project not started.
- m. Action Item from 12/7/21 - Verberg Park and Kalamazoo River – Chad Robinson, Wood Environmental – Tree Removals and Replantings.
 - 90 trees planted. Park will be open to the public in November.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

J. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Committee Member LaBelle stated the City received one million dollars from the USDA grant. Projects to be determined at a later time. We are currently working on a DNR grant for additional funding. The monies will go toward plantings and removals.

Committee Member LaBelle stated plantings will be starting in the near future. The oaks will be pruned soon as part of this years Block Program. They have been waiting for the oak wilt season to end. This will include the west side of Kalamazoo, parts of the Douglas area, and the West Main Hill area. They also plan to do pruning on various streetside trees as well as emergency removals. There are 90 trees that will be planted throughout the City.

Chair Ladd stated both the USDA grant and DNR grant funds that we are in the process of receiving will be entirely dedicated to disadvantage, census track, areas.

Chair Ladd stated the Tree Ordinance and Manual final drafts are completed. The Manual is at a point where it is relatively complete. Chair Ladd to set up a meeting to do a final review

of the Manual with the Committee. The Ordinance will be presented to City Commission with Davey Resource Group once it is finalized.

Chair Ladd thanked the Committee for all their effort and input in obtaining the tree grants and completing the Tree Ordinance and Manual. The Tree Condition Survey played a key role in obtaining the grants.

Committee Member Walter stated EGLE had two webinars that had to do with resilient urban trees. It was well done. She learned Japanese Lilac trees are beginning to get invasive in New York. If anyone is interested, she is happy to send the link to them.

K. ADJOURNMENT

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

Submitted by: *Karen Rutherford* Date: *12-7-2023*
Recording Secretary

Approved by: *[Signature]* Date: *12/7/23*
Staff Liaison