

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
JANUARY 6, 2016**

The Michigan City Tree Board met in a regular meeting in the Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall Building, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Wednesday, January 6 2016, at 6:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour, and place duly established for the holding of said meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

President Mick Wulff called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Board members present: Patricia Boy, Barb Ginther, Bill Ginther, Laura Kalk, Mick Wulff.

Board members absent: Kathy Ceperich. There is one vacancy.

Staff present: City Forester Frank Seilheimer and Planning Department Administrative Assistant Debbie Wilson.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The floor was opened for nominations.

The nominating committee submitted their slate of officers for nomination at the December meeting: Mick Wulff, President; Laura Kalk, Vice-President; Kathy Ceperich, Secretary.

There were no other nominations. Nominations were closed. The vote was taken and a unanimous ballot cast.

Officers for 2016 are Mick Wulff, President; Laura Kalk, Vice-President; and Kathy Ceperich, Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of December 2, 2015.

Motion by Mrs. Ginther and seconded by Mrs. Boy approving the minutes of the regular meeting of December 2, 2015 as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: Ayes: Patricia Boy, Barb Ginther, Bill Ginther, Laura Kalk, Mick Wulff – 5 Nays: None – 0 Absent: Kathy Ceperich – 1. Motion CARRIED.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ended 12/31/15.

Motion by Mrs. Boy and seconded by Mrs. Ginther approving the financial report ended 12/31/15 as presented. Voice vote was as follows: Ayes: Patricia Boy, Barb Ginther, Bill Ginther, Laura Kalk, Mick Wulff – 5 Nays: None – 0 Absent: Kathy Ceperich – 1. Motion CARRIED.

CLAIMS

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims for January.

Motion by Mrs. Boy and seconded by Mr. Ginther approving the claims for January as presented. Voice vote was as follows: Ayes: Patricia Boy, Barb Ginther, Bill Ginther, Laura Kalk, Mick Wulff – 5 Nays: None – 0 Absent: Kathy Ceperich – 1. Motion CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS

(None)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach

(Calendar Events)

Mrs. Ginther announced another "Give Back Night" fundraiser to be held at Galveston Restaurant on February 11th. Coupons will be available at City Hall and will be distributed to other areas as well.

Mr. Wulff stated that the Board should tentatively plan on participating in the St. Patrick's Day Parade this year.

City Park Trees

Mrs. Boy commented that the Park Department did a great job last year decorating the trees with holiday lights.

City Street Trees

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the contractual tree fund has been budgeted for the same amount as last year so there shouldn't be a problem taking care of problems as they arise.

Mr. Wulff mentioned that a lot of trees on the outskirts of the city came down during the last storm.

Mr. Seilheimer said there weren't any issues from the last storm, but there were some from the storm prior to that around Thanksgiving.

Grant Application and Maintenance

Mr. Seilheimer reported that he is currently working on an Indiana Urban Waters Partnership Grant for forestry restoration in the Winding Creek Cove area to remove invasive species and do replanting from the Ash tree mortality along the creek, covering approximately 5 acres. It is a matching grant totaling \$45,000.

Mr. Wulff asked if there is any state funding for taking down Ash trees.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that the pool of money is so small because it is lumped into the total grant program for the year which also includes monies for inventories and planting projects.

Purchasing and Tree Planting

Mr. Seilheimer stated that there is no purchasing or tree planting at this time, but there could possibly be some planting at the golf course this spring. There could also be some replacement planting in Patriot Park as part of NIPSCO's mitigation for upgrading their main supply gas pipe which is going through that property.

Planning Department

Mrs. Boy had no tree related activities to report at this time.

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance

Mr. Seilheimer reported that he has not had the opportunity to log any activities or change the inventory since it is not kept on line any more. He indicated he will get caught up on it during the slow times.

Tree City Designation Maintenance

Mr. Seilheimer reported that the Tree City application was submitted in December. All activities qualified and ended up being well above the minimum per capita requirement for the program. Approximately 53 trees were planted last year, most of them for the 11th Street project.

Mr. Wulff asked if most of the planting was a result of planned projects, and not from going into the neighborhoods and planting trees.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that was correct.

Mr. Wulff asked if there are plans in the future to do neighborhood tree planting.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the City is not staffed to take care of the trees. The City Council would need to be approached for additional funding to hire a contractor for the maintenance of those trees for a 1 or 2 year establishment program. For a 1 year establishment program the cost would be between \$270 - \$325 per tree or about \$30,000 for 100 trees.

Mr. Wulff stated that it would be advantageous for the City to come up with the necessary funds because tree planting provides for the most cost benefit over the long term. Mr. Wulff questioned if this would be something the Redevelopment Commission could fund.

Mr. Seilheimer explained that the tree planting is not within the area where they are allowed to spend money. Even in the newly created TIF districts it will take some time for those areas to accumulate enough tax revenue to fund projects. He said the funding for tree planting would have to either be budgeted through tax dollars or appropriated through riverboat funds. He stated that it would be ideal to have \$10,000-\$15,000 in the tree planting line item every year in addition to the contractual tree removal line item. The contractual tree dollars come out of the CEDIT fund because tree removal is part of maintaining a healthy community. Those funds fluctuate every year because they are also used for demolitions, landscaping repairs, etc. He said it would just be a matter of getting that line item allocated and then the money would be available every year for planting trees. Mr. Seilheimer explained that there was going to be a surplus of money in landscaping repairs this year since all the funds weren't used last year, so he was able to do tree replacement in Elston Grove. There is the potential to do the same next year if there is a surplus again.

Mr. Wulff stated that tree planting should be the board's mission and a goal to set every year.

Mr. Seilheimer suggested that the board attend the budget meeting this year to request funding.

OLD BUSINESS

(Update on board member position)

Mrs. Boy reported that at the Council meeting last night she asked that anyone who is on a neighborhood association and interested in serving a one year term on the Tree Board to contact her so the Council can determine if a neighborhood association representative could be a board member position. She said they have to wait to see if there is any interest before changing the ordinance. If there is no interest, the Council will have to look at appointing someone else since the Vector Control position has been eliminated. Mrs. Boy said she would wait about a month to see if there is any interest and report back to the board.

Mr. Wulff asked if there is a way to get the request out to social media.

Mrs. Boy stated that she would put it on Facebook and send it to the media as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Seilheimer reported that the Park Board just approved the contract for tree removal at the golf course. It came in under budget. The contract was awarded to Jon's Tree Service for the removal of 69 trees along with stumps at a cost of \$123,500. Green Leaves Tree Service submitted a bid of \$129,500. The line item was for \$140,000. Since it came in less than 20% of the total project, there will probably be a change order issued for the full amount to take care of additional trimming and emergency vehicle access issues at the golf course. Any money left over will be used for tree planting at the golf course.

Mr. Wulff asked the status of the tree project at the cemetery.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the Cemetery Board has all the information on how the project needs to be run, contractor requirements, etc., so the project will be administered through them. He will be their point of contact for follow up. The project cost is \$106,000 with the potential for another \$24,000.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Boy stated that the Council has not yet released their appointments for boards and commissions, but she believes she will be appointed to the Tree Board again.

NEXT MEETING DATE

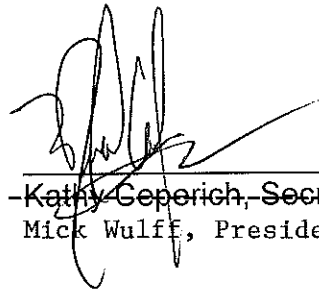
Mr. Wulff announced that the next regular meeting will be February 3, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Boy – unanimously approved.

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:23 p.m.



~~Kathy Ceperich, Secretary~~
Mick Wulff, President