

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
FEBRUARY 11, 2009**

The Michigan City Tree Board met in a regular meeting in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall Building, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Wednesday, February 11, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour and place duly established for the holding of said meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman William Bolton called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called with the following noted present for the record: William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan and Mick Wulff. Jeffrey Meyer was absent (5 present, 1 absent, 1 vacancy) Staff in attendance: City Forester Frank Seilheimer and Secretary Debbie Wilson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of January 7, 2008.

A motion was made by Mrs. Boy approving the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Morlan, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial report ended 01/31/09 was submitted and reviewed by the Board.

The Chair entertained a motion for approval.

A motion was made by Mrs. Boy to approve the financial report as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ceperich, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

CLAIMS

The following claims were submitted for approval:

Debbie Wilson	Secretarial Services – Feb 2009	\$200.00
Dave Morlan	Board member pay – Feb 2009	50.00

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims.

A motion was made by Mrs. Boy to approve the claims as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ceperich, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arbor Day: At the workshop last month, several new ideas were discussed which could be incorporated into Arbor Day and/or outreach activities. A list of monthly activities was prepared. The Board is looking to participate in the St. Patrick’s Day parade next month. They will try to participate in some type of activity each month to bring about outreach into the community.

The Arbor Day celebration will be held in April. As a way to receive donations, a suggestion was made to have Board members out at various business locations giving away seedlings. Another activity discussed was planting a tree on Arbor Day. The Board will finalize activities for Arbor Day next month.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that he is going to plant two large trees by the Lighthouse Museum. There is enough room to plant another one and have the dedication there.

City Park Trees: 100 gator bags were ordered. The bags will provide slow release watering for trees in the park.

City Street Trees: No activity at this time.

Education/Public Relations: It was determined that a formal vote should be taken to approve funds to participate in the St. Patrick’s Day parade and print tickets.

A motion was made by Mr. Wulff to allocate funds in an amount not to exceed \$250 for costs associated with participating in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Boy, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

The Board is also looking to draft a flyer showcasing accomplishments since becoming Tree City.

It was mentioned that officials at the Blue Chip Hotel grand opening ceremony alluded to the fact of how green and beautiful the view of the city is from the upper levels of the hotel.

Grant Application and Maintenance: There is no grant activity at this time due to limited funding through the DNR. Mr. Seilheimer stated that the City is in good shape with the trees we have.

Purchasing and Tree Planting: Only some selective replacement trees will be purchased, if any. Effort will be made to plant trees at Streibel Pond.

Planning Department: The Plan Commission is currently working on rules, procedures and building heights.

LaPorte is looking at passing standards pertaining to trees for subdivision development.

The county-wide plan is to be completed within the year. At that time each Plan Commission will have to look at adopting their own ordinances. Michigan City could possibly use LaPorte's as a model ordinance.

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance: Inventorying of trees has begun on the west side.

Mr. Bolton attended educational meetings last week. He will forward information onto Board members regarding the cost estimator program which was discussed. He mentioned that a predatory insect will be released in some counties for the Emerald Ash Borer problem.

Mr. Wulff has attended landscaping conferences where the injectable treatment is used for the Ash Borer. He suggested using this method to treat high profile areas such as Franklin and Wabash Streets.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that it is expensive and has to be done more than once. He pointed out that sticky traps have been put all around here and none of the insects have been found. He does not see a problem with the insect here.

Tree City Designation: Awards will be announced next month.

Mrs. Boy asked Mr. Seilheimer to provide the Board with a list of things to use toward the Growth Award.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Seilheimer will be attending a rubber sidewalk seminar at Purdue University in Lafayette on March 11th.

Mr. Wulff asked for discussion on the new ethics ordinance and how it would affect some of the Board members as businessmen and conflicts with the Board and business with the City.

Mrs. Boy responded that it basically has to do with accepting gifts and if a Board member's company would bid on something, they would have to abstain from voting. They would also need to sign the conflict of interest statement.

Mr. Wulff made note that last year the City spent \$250,000 in contractual services for trees. He said a lot of companies were involved, but his company was never contacted. He questioned if he was the only one that was not called, and if so, why.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the \$250,000 also included all brush and debris pick up. He said that contractors are called on rotation – whoever answers the call first. If the contractor lives and works in Michigan City, they get called first. He calls the contractors who have bucket trucks available. Mr. Seilheimer stated that he does not think it would be right to call Mr. Wulff to do work in Michigan City since he is a member of the Tree Board. He also noted that the dollar amounts did not exceed the requirement for the bid process. When federal money is used for the sidewalks, then the tree work will become part of the bid process.

Mrs. Boy suggested that, once formed, Mr. Wulff attend an ethics advisory board meeting and ask them how it would be handled.

Mr. Seilheimer advised that the rules need to be cleaned up and rewritten. Rotation needs to be redefined and minimum requirements need to include the availability of a bucket truck.

In another matter, Mr. Wulff stated that it has been brought up several times in the past that board members, past and present, cannot use their position for personal gain. He pointed out that there is a past board member still using his past position for his personal gain. Mr. Wulff stated that this violates the conflicts of interest.

Mr. Seilheimer acknowledged that it is unethical, but it is not an ethics violation because he is not a board member. A measure of corrective action needs to be established.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

A workshop will be held on Wednesday, February 18th, at noon, at Shoreline Restaurant.

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4th, at 6:00 p.m., in the Common Council Chambers of City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ceperich – seconded by Mrs. Boy and unanimously approved.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Kathy Ceperich, Secretary