

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
APRIL 1, 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, April 1, 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 6:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following members were noted present for the record: William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff. Jeffrey Meyer was absent. (6 present – 1 absent) Staff in attendance: City Forester Frank Seilheimer, Secretary Debbie Wilson

Chairman Bolton welcomed Rebecca Pelath to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of March 4, 2009.

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

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

SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial report ended 3/31/09 was submitted and reviewed by the Board.

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report.

A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Mrs. Boy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ceperich, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath (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 – April 2009	\$200.00
Dave Morlan	Board member pay – April 2009	50.00
The Beacher	Overage of appropriated funds for St. Patrick's Day Parade – printing	47.56
Vallonia Nursery	Seedlings for Arbor Day	414.20
Kathy Ceperich	Refund – supplies for St. Patrick's Day Parade	56.20

Ms. Ceperich explained that the claim for The Beacher is a result of additional costs that exceeded the Board's appropriation of \$250 for the St. Patrick's Day parade, as well as the refund to her for supplies. She noted that the decorations are being saved and will be used again next year. There are also some cards left which can be used again.

Ms. Ceperich also noted that she ordered seedlings to be distributed for Arbor Day (the claim for \$414.20 to Vallonia Nursery).

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims.

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Boy read a letter into the record from the Mayor expressing his gratitude to the Tree Board for their success in Michigan City being recognized as Tree City for the ninth consecutive year.

Mrs. Boy pointed out the Tree Board being recognized in a News Dispatch article for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Chairman Bolton acknowledged that Mr. Wulff entered and should be noted present for the record.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arbor Day: Ms. Ceperich indicated that stores were receptive to participate with the Tree Board and the seedling giveaway. Two locations are available on Saturday, April 25th – Wal Mart and Kabelin's. All would be available during the week. She stated that she ordered a good assortment (1300) of seedlings to be distributed. Those include: pecan, red oak, river birch, scarlet oak, shumard oak, sweetgum, tulip, white oak, bald cypress, hazelnut, dogwood.

Board members agreed to distribute the seedlings at both Wal Mart and Kabelin's on Saturday, April 25th, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Pictures and information on each tree variety will be available for the public to view at both locations. Planting instructions will be included with the seedlings. The proclamation will be read prior to the giveaway. There will be a press release for Tree City recognition – the seedling giveaway will be included in the press release.

City Park Trees: Mr. Seilheimer reported that he is working along with Darren Westphal of the Park Department in planting an additional 30 trees in a section east of the main entrance. That area is also getting an underground sprinkler system. Mr. Seilheimer indicated that more trees have been planted in the park than were taken out due to storm damage and old age. Additional trees will be planted this fall in the marina and Coast Guard areas.

City Street Trees: Mr. Seilheimer reported that they are taking care of some odds and ends by planting trees that they did not get to last fall. He does not want to do much planting in the spring as there is more success with fall planting.

Ms. Ceperich recalled at last month's meeting it was mentioned that trees should be planted in every area of the city, not just one targeted area.

Mr. Seilheimer responded that they are not targeting just one specific area. Everyone on the list, that could receive a tree, got one. There were some that were not possible because of location restrictions such as distance and utilities. Other requests were denied because they are located in future sewer project areas. Planting in those areas will take place after the infrastructure improvements are completed. Mr. Seilheimer commented that it is more efficient to plant by street.

Mr. Morlan added that if someone has a tree removed and wants it replaced, it does not always work out due to utility locations and the planting placement restrictions of the ordinance.

If the restrictions do not allow for planting on City property, Mrs. Boy inquired into the possibility of the homeowner adopting a tree to plant on private property.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that it would create a liability issue for the City. Currently the City requires a release to be signed for each specific task.

Mr. Morlan reported that they will be focusing on getting the old inventory out of the nursery and planted this fall.

Mrs. Boy questioned the status of the tree inventory.

Mr. Seilheimer responded that he has not started it yet. The touch screen on the handheld device does not operate under 45°. He hopes to start within the next couple weeks, weather permitting.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that he started walking the 5th Ward for sidewalk assessment. Approximately 25-40 trees need to be removed in an area bounded by Poplar/Springland/Carroll/Michigan. When that area is complete, they will move across the Boulevard into the area bounded by Michigan/Barker/Carroll/Poplar.

Education/Public Relations: Ms. Ceperich suggested participation in the festival of lights at the park with some type of tree display and a "Michigan City Tree Board" sign along with it. The cost to purchase something would be around \$1500. To keep costs down, Ms. Ceperich suggested having someone build it.

Mr. Seilheimer responded that the most cost effective way would be to just decorate one of the larger trees in the park and have a lit sign in front of it with the Michigan City Tree Board logo.

In light of saving costs, Board members were more receptive to the idea of decorating the real tree and purchasing a small sign with the Tree Board logo.

Grant Application and Maintenance: There are no grants to apply for at this time.

Purchasing and Tree Planting: Mr. Seilheimer stated that he does not have any plans to make any large quantity tree purchases. If he does purchase any trees it would be specific species for the Square area.

Planning Department: Mrs. Boy reported that the County-wide Plan has been approved. LSL Associates of Indianapolis is currently writing the ordinances to go with it. Then it will go through the approval process again.

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance: Mr. Seilheimer stated that he received an e-mail from the forest service regarding carbon sequestration. He will forward the information to Board members.

Tree City: Mr. Bolton stated that being recognized as Tree City for the ninth consecutive year is an accomplishment to be proud of and it is showing with the City street trees.

Mr. Seilheimer asked the Board to consider purchasing new Tree City signs this year. The old signs are worn out/damaged. America in Bloom wants more attention concentrated on the entryways into the city. The Tree City signs could be incorporated into those entryways.

The Board agreed. Mr. Seilheimer will order the signs and report back at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Morlan noted a comment made by Mr. Wulff at the last meeting – “Mr. Wulff said that the Board needs to steer Mr. Seilheimer and Mr. Morlan to do that kind of thing” referring to how trees are planted.

Mr. Morlan stated that as explained earlier, they plant trees according to the guidelines. He said they are only two people and do the best they can. He reminded everyone that the Tree Board is only an advisory board and does not give orders to anyone. Mr. Morlan stated that this is where he stands on this matter and said Mr. Wulff’s comments were uncalled for.

Mr. Wulff apologized and said the wordage should be advised.

Mr. Morlan stated that they are open to suggestions. He said that Mr. Seilheimer is doing an excellent job as the City Forester. He is smart and knows what he is doing. He said they are not trying to stiff anyone from getting trees. He would like to see every yard have a dozen trees. They look at areas that really need trees and try to spread

them around as much as they can. Since Mr. Seilheimer has started working for the City, he has planted almost 1,000 trees.

Mr. Wulff responded that this is not about Mr. Morlan's or Mr. Seilheimer's credentials. Mr. Wulff stated that people expect taxpayer dollars to be seen around the city; that is all he was trying to say.

Mr. Morlan stated that the taxpayer dollars are being seen everywhere you look. More trees have been planted in the park than were lost. He said he does not know how Mr. Wulff's comments were meant, and does not care. He reiterated that the Tree Board is an advisory board. He said there is a problem if the board starts telling other departments how to do their jobs or telling property owners how to take care of their trees, and he does not want to be part of that problem.

Mr. Bolton remarked that the City has come a long way since 1996 when the Tree Board was formed. For a long time, until the City was able to hire a Forester, there was a lot of footwork, planning and writing of ordinances. Having Mr. Seilheimer is the best thing that could happen for the City. Mr. Bolton stated that Mr. Seilheimer has done a great job and he appreciates his work. Mr. Bolton added that he also appreciates everyone who has been on the Board over the years and given their input.

In other business, Mr. Seilheimer announced the winners of the tree drawing – Roberta Smolenski on Fulton Street and Cheryl Plummer on Wrobel Avenue. Mr. Seilheimer will contact the winners next week.

Mr. Seilheimer pointed out that the winner of last year's drawing started out with two trees and liked them so much that they planted three more on their own.

Chairman Bolton asked if the Board wanted to have a workshop on the greenspace ordinance.

Mr. Seilheimer suggested waiting to see what the County-wide Plan has. The Board could also work off of LaPorte's ordinance, which would be more specific.

Mrs. Boy thanked everyone who participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting will be May 6, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

/s/ Kathy Ceperich, Secretary