

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
APRIL 4, 2012**

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, April 4, 2012, 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 6:17 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following members were noted present for the record: Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Laura Kalk, Jeffrey Meyer, Rebecca Pelath, and Mick Wulff. Dave Morlan was absent. (6 present – 1 absent) 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 the regular meeting of February 1, 2012.

A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Mrs. Kalk. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wulff, with voice vote as follows: (Ayes) Patricia Boy, Laura Kalk, Jeffrey Meyer, Mick Wulff (Nays) None (Abstain) Rebecca Pelath

With a vote of 4 ayes, 0 nays, and 1 abstention, the minutes were APPROVED.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial reports ended February 29, 2012 and March 31, 2012.

A motion was made by Mrs. Boy to approve the financial reports. The motion was seconded by Mr. Meyer, with voice vote as follows: (Ayes) Patricia Boy, Laura Kalk, Jeffrey Meyer, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (Nays) None

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

CLAIMS

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims list for April.

A motion to approve the claims list was made by Mrs. Boy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pelath, with voice vote as follows: (Ayes) Patricia Boy, Laura Kalk, Jeffrey Meyer, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (Nays) None

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

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach:

Mr. Seilheimer announced that Arbor Day will be held April 27th at Krueger Middle School from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Trees have been purchased from the non-reverting fund for an energy conservation demonstration planting on the west and south sides of the school. Senator Lugar's office will donate seedlings to give away to the students and some of the seedlings will be retained to start a nursery at the school. 35 large trees will also be planted. In addition to Senator Lugar's office, also participating in the event will be Save the Dunes, LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Superintendent of the Schools, and Mayor Ron Meer will read the proclamation.

Mrs. Kalk and Mr. Wulff participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade on behalf of Tree Board. They decorated a truck and handed out raffle tickets for the tree giveaway.

Mrs. Kalk mentioned that at a meeting last fall she brought up the issue of needle drop with evergreens and the Board discussed ways to educate the public on treatments for the different tree issues. She feels now is a good time to get the information in the newspaper because people are starting to get out and take care of their gardens. Mrs. Kalk stated that she would take care of getting the article in the newspaper this month.

Mr. Seilheimer advised that he was contacted by someone from the newspaper and he gave them some information to include in their subplot section of the paper for Earth Day.

Mr. Seilheimer reported that on April 20th Tryon Farms will be holding wetland/Earth Day forestry activities on their property with students from Niemann Elementary School.

Ms Ceperich entered and was noted present for the record.

City Park Trees:

Mr. Seilheimer reported that the Park Department staff did clean up and trimming at Gardena Park and Memorial Park. Park Department staff will also plant trees in the medians by the zoo and do some planting in the smaller parks. Mr. Seilheimer assisted Park staff with a 60' split locust tree hanging over a deck of the observation tower in the zoo. Park staff will continue to assess and address problem trees at the zoo as well as inside Washington Park.

City Street Trees:

Mr. Seilheimer reported that 9 large trees were removed from small spaces and approximately 16 trees were trimmed for obstructions with stop signs and accessibility issues in alleyways with garbage trucks. He said after Arbor Day they will target the Eastport Neighborhood (Michigan/8th/Springland/Walker) with tree removals according to the inventory.

Mr. Seilheimer advised that the Street Department completed chainsaw safety training today – everyone has been certified and trained in proper chainsaw operations. They will begin trimming some of the low hanging branches for clearance of school buses.

Mr. Meyer asked when the City will do pick up for branches.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that they are currently doing it. This is the last week for Area 1 and they will start in Area 2 next week. Central Services can provide the schedule.

When a mulberry or some undesirable tree/bush has been removed, Mr. Meyer asked if something is used to keep it from sprouting back up.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that an oil based herbicide could be used or the stump can be ground out. He said everything in a large radius would have to be sterilized to keep the root sprouts from running.

Grant Application and Maintenance:

Mr. Seilheimer reported that he finished the DNR Make Your Trees Count grant application for tree planting in the Southgate Neighborhood. The remainder of funds in the NICTD account (\$3,250) with an in-kind match of labor and time will be used with their cash to purchase and plant trees. If the grant is awarded, the project would be implemented this fall.

Purchasing and Tree Planting:

Ms. Ceperich asked if there is any long term plans for purchasing trees.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that some trees were purchased for Arbor Day. He added that if the grant is awarded the NICTD funds will be exhausted and another budgetary line item will have to be found for tree purchasing. He said \$10,000 would be the minimum amount to cover replacement of what has been removed.

Mr. Meyer commented that he lives in the Edgewood neighborhood and that within the last six months about 15-20 trees have been removed by property owners. He said the owner does have the right to remove trees on their property, but they were large healthy trees and he is puzzled as to why they were removed. Mr. Meyer stated that the Board needs to look for ways to educate the public on the benefits of trees. He noted that Davey Tree was in the area and he wasn't sure if they were doing private work or line clearance, and if they were licensed to do private work.

Mr. Wulff replied that they are not currently on the list of licensed Arborists, but they could do private work if they were licensed. He added that he is not sure if the rules for line clearance have changed, but said it seems that the areas of line clearance have been extended.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the rules have changed a little. He said that most of the distances from the lines are not necessarily based on what lines they are, but rather what voltage they carry – the higher the voltage, the more space required. Also, if more than 30% of total crown reduction is taken, they are obligated to remove it and work with the private property owner for replacement or offering of monetary value.

Board members discussed ways of communicating with the public through an updated website, including information with water bills, or using social networks such as face book.

After lengthy discussion, Board members agreed to brainstorm ideas with each other by email, and Mr. Meyer will check with the Water Department about including information with the bills.

Planning Department:

Mrs. Boy said there were no tree related activities to report.

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance:

Mr. Seilheimer stated that he is utilizing the data from the inventory. It is up to date. He will be using it to assess where they will be planting and trimming this year.

Mrs. Boy asked Mr. Seilheimer if he could produce statistical information for the Council to show how the inventory is helping.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that he could produce a report showing how the inventory is providing the City with efficiencies, identifying areas where tax dollars should be spent, how it is saving the City money, etc.

Tree City:

Mr. Seilheimer stated that Michigan City has been named Tree City again (twelfth year). He said there are new signs to be put up. One area being considered is at Carroll Avenue/Michigan Boulevard where the planter boxes start.

Ms. Ceperich noted some of the dead trees in the planter boxes.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that twelve have been replaced so far.

Mr. Wulff mentioned that on Highway 49 in Chesterton he noticed that they have a flagpole and rotate different flags, one of them being a Tree City flag.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that they change flags at the Central Services building on Kentucky Street and they have put up the Tree City flag.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

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

/s/ Kathy Ceperich, Secretary _____