

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
AUGUST 5, 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, August 5, 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 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following members were noted present for the record: William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Jeffrey Meyer, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff. (7 present – 0 absent) Staff in attendance: City Forester Frank Seilheimer and Secretary Debbie Wilson.

It was noted that the Council affirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Rebecca Pelath to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of July 8, 2009.

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, Jeffrey Meyer, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial report ended 6/30/08 was submitted and reviewed by the Board.

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

A motion to approve the financial report was made by Mrs. Boy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pelath, with the vote as follows:

(AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Jeffrey Meyer, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

CLAIMS

The claims list was submitted and reviewed.

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 Mr. Meyer, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Jeffrey Meyer, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach: Ms. Ceperich reminded everyone that the Boys and Girls Club "Day for Kids" is on Saturday, September 12th, from 11:00-2:00, at Marquette Mall. She asked for Board member volunteers to participate in activities with the kids. The Tree Board will have a table where they can have a display and provide literature to the public. Board members discussed ideas for child-oriented activities for the kids.

A motion was made by Mr. Wulff to allocate \$100 if needed for this activity. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Boy, with the vote as follows: (AYES): William Bolton, Patricia Boy, Kathy Ceperich, Jeffrey Meyer, Dave Morlan, Rebecca Pelath, Mick Wulff (NAYS): None

With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the motion was APPROVED.

It was agreed to hold a workshop to formalize the setup for this activity on Tuesday, August 25, 2009, at 12:30 p.m., at Swingbelly's.

City Park Trees: Mr. Seilheimer stated that his funds can no longer be utilized by the Park Department for trees. He will provide advice if they want it but they will handle their own funding issues.

City Street Trees: Mr. Seilheimer reported that the contractual tree account has been exhausted. There is about \$45,000 of work left to do that cannot be done.

Mr. Meyer asked about the Coolspring Avenue project.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that the Coolspring Avenue project is an infrastructure improvement program funded through state and federal funds, engineering, as well as capital expenditures through riverboat funds.

Mr. Meyer asked if sidewalks will be put in.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that they will. There will probably be 5-6' tree lawns that can be filled in appropriately.

Grant Application and Maintenance: Mr. Seilheimer stated that he will be applying for a \$15,000 urban forestry grant – Indiana Make your Trees Count. This is a 50/50 grant with \$130,000 available. Tree planting projects will not be funded unless it provides some new energy efficient technique. The focus is on inventories. The State is looking for a broad band of support between not-for-profit community business and independent citizens. Mr. Seilheimer will forward a public comment form to the Board members to fill out and for distribution.

He will also be applying for a grant as part of the \$475 million Great Lakes stimulus package. \$1.2 million is available for a 50% match towards generating the i-streets and i-trees inventory quantifying urban cooling storm water runoff. If full funding is received it would fund 70% of the total project. This grant would work more into what will be mandated on the federal level and by being able to quantify the information it will allow us to apply for other levels of money. Mr. Seilheimer stated that a letter of support will be required from the Common Council as well as the Controller's Office to ensure funding is available to match the grant. \$140,000 needs to be available in the budget with a promise of giving half of it back upon funding.

Purchasing and Tree Planting: Mr. Seilheimer stated that the tree problem on Washington Street will be taken care of this fall which will require changing some of the soil and purchasing some trees.

Planning Department: No items to report.

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance: Mr. Seilheimer that stated if we receive the funding from the grant, the data can be collected. Once the data is collected, he can write the plan.

Tree City: Mr. Seilheimer informed the Board that we do not qualify for the Growth Award. He cannot come up with \$165,000 which is based upon the \$283,000 spent last year on trees.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Boy asked for an update on the changes to the Tree Ordinance.

Mr. Seilheimer reported that he forwarded the information onto the City Attorney.

With regard to taking fees out of the ordinance charged to contractors for removing trees, Mr. Wulff questioned how we would account for trees removed from the City right-of-way.

Mr. Seilheimer explained that if a tree is on City right-of-way, he would be contracting the work out. It doesn't make sense to charge the contractor, who would in turn charge the City. Mr. Seilheimer stated that he is proposing all fees be taken out.

Mr. Bolton explained the reason for the fees being charged was because there was no Forester at the time and it was the only way to keep track of the tree inventory.

Mr. Seilheimer added that we also don't want to discourage homeowners from planting trees on their own by being charged a fee to do it.

As requested at last months' meeting, Mr. Seilheimer informed the Board that he moved Green Leaves Tree Service into the tree work rotation. He said he does a good job.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Seilheimer commented that if you live in the city and are not happy with your level of financial commitment to community trees, you need to voice your displeasure to your local congressman. Contact information is provided on the bulletin board in City Hall.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 2009.

Mr. Meyer apologized for not being in attendance at the meetings due to his work schedule. He said he wants to be a more frequent participant.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

/s/ Kathy Ceperich, Secretary