

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD  
DECEMBER 7, 2011**

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, December 7, 2011, 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 6:15 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) A quorum was noted. 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 November 2, 2011.

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

***With a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays, the minutes were unanimously APPROVED.***

**SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ended 11/30/11.

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

***With a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays, the financial report was unanimously APPROVED.***

**CLAIMS**

Mr. Seilheimer explained the breakdown of charges for membership dues.

The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims list submitted with the deletion of pay for Dave Morlan as he was not present.

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

***With a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays, the claims list was unanimously APPROVED.***

**COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS****Outreach:**

Board members discussed possibilities for a soil tunnel with the availability of an 8' diameter cement pipe. They will continue to explore options and revisit the idea in March after the ADA requirements are in place.

**City Park Trees:**

Mr. Seilheimer reported that the Park Department has been utilizing stock from the City nursery for planting in Adams Park and Patriot Park. After winter they will thin out trees at Gardena Park.

**Tree Walk:**

Ms. Kalk stated that she had the plan laid out, but the upcoming ADA laws will make a big difference in cost and how it is laid out. Prior to the laws the tree walk was just going to be a natural walk, now there will have to be ADA accessible walkways and signs will have to be audible/Braille. The Park Department will want a more solid plan presented to them. Ms. Kalk will continue to work on the plan with the changes and the Board will also revisit this idea in March once the ADA requirements are in place.

Mr. Seilheimer noted that the City has imposed penalties on residents who remove trees/landscaping from the esplanade. The penalties include remediation and planting of 12-15 trees in the park. He said those trees could be utilized and planted where they already work within the traffic flow; and the plan, if implemented, would be laid out around the existing tree sites.

**City Street Trees:**

Mr. Seilheimer reported that \$150,298 was spent in 2011 for contractual tree services. This has alleviated 100% of dead standing trees within the public rights-of-way as identified in the inventory. 93% of the dollars spent were with local tree service companies. About 64 trees were removed and there was a lot of large trimming. \$17,000-\$22,000 of tree removals was funded through the sidewalk program budget.

Mr. Meyer asked if there is a bid process.

Mr. Seilheimer replied that it does not meet the financial requirements to bid out. He said there are 2-3 local companies that are utilized because they have the heavy equipment available.

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Mr. Meyer stated that he is noticing a lot of big hangers – some in the right-of-way and some in people's yards. He asked if there is something the City can do to pressure the people to remove those branches.

Mr. Seilheimer stated that if it is a private tree and the branch is threatening the safety of the public right-of-way, the City can work in the right-of-way space to alleviate the issue. If it is a private tree and there are complaints, the City could send a notice referencing the state statute that they are maintaining a public nuisance. There is no City ordinance requiring homeowners to remove dead branches from their trees.

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Mrs. Boy stated she has received complaints from Elston Grove residents about the large number of trees being removed for the streetscape project.

Mr. Seilheimer explained that the trees won't survive excavation for the sewer lines going in and IDEM has guidelines for distances of sewer lines from water lines. He said that after talking to the residents, they are more interested in what is going to be put back in. It was also decided to put off a few tree removals. The replanting locations will also alleviate the interference with utilities. Councilman Rich Murphy will hold a neighborhood meeting to explain and clarify the decision making process.

**Grant Application and Maintenance:**

No report.

**Purchasing and Tree Planting:**

Mr. Seilheimer stated that they have not purchased any trees. They have done some small tree plantings. Next year their efforts will be focusing on the maintenance of the trees planted on Michigan Boulevard.

**Planning Department:**

No report.

**Urban Forest Plan Maintenance:**

Mr. Seilheimer reported that during the winter months they will log all the work done into the inventory and create new outputs which will give them the ability to replan the following years' objectives, maintenance, schedules, and costs.

**Tree City:**

Mr. Seilheimer reported that all the requirements are met and he will submit the application on line once the reports are completed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Adopt a Tree Program:**

Mrs. Boy apologized that she did not have time to follow-up yet.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Seilheimer reported that Arbor Day 2012 will be held at Krueger as part of the environmental theme. The tree planting will be worked into a sample restoration area project that they are working on as part of their outdoor classroom activities. An invitation will be extended to Senator Lugar's office to continue the partnership which has been created over the past few years.

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Mr. Seilheimer also reported that four trees were planted at Lake Hills as part of their after school forestry program.

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Mrs. Boy and Ms. Pelath volunteered and were appointed to the Nominating Committee for election of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary in 2012.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2012.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ceperich – seconded by Mr. Meyer and unanimously approved.

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

/s/ Kathy Ceperich, Secretary