

**City of Kalamazoo  
TREE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
January 8, 2019**

Stockbridge Main Conference Room  
415 E. Stockbridge, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Members Present: Orrin Dorr, Public Works Manager, COK  
Deborah Nichols, Consumers Energy  
Chris Patchell, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)  
Steve Skalski, Asst. City Engineer Water Dept., COK  
Dave Cooper, Arborist, City of Kalamazoo

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Mikelis Austrins- Austrins Family Dentistry  
John Kakoczki, CSM Group  
Ron Masek, TowerPinkster  
Shannon Rice, CSM Group

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Dorr called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Dorr completed roll call and determined the aforementioned members were present.

**C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Dorr introduced the guests, Mikelis Austrins with Austrins Family Dentistry, John Kakoczki and Shannon Rice with CSM Group, and Ron Masek with TowerPinkster

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the January 8, 2019 Agenda.

**Mr. Skalski supported by Mr. Patchell moved approval of the January 8, 2019 Tree Committee Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (November 6, 2018)**

There were no changes to the November 6, 2018 Minutes.

**Mr. Patchell supported by Mr. Skalski, moved approval of the November 6, 2018 Tree Committee Minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

## **F. NEW BUSINESS**

### **401 S. Burdick – Bronson Lab Project – Tree Removals**

Mr. Dorr opened discussion for the removal of trees at 401 S. Burdick – Bronson Lab Project.

Mr. Kakoczki presented the project. He stated they have torn down two-thirds of the existing Gazette Building and restored what is known as the Conn Building, the original paper plant. Mr. Kakoczki stated they have installed the foundation of the new lab building that will be on the site and tie into the Conn Building. This is roughly a 50,000 square foot two story building that sets right at the sidewalk along Burdick St. During demolition of the old building they left the existing foundation walls in the ground to avoid disturbing the sidewalk and the right of way. Now that they are building the new building right up to the sidewalk, they have to remove the old foundation, which is causing them to disturb sidewalk and trees. The site plan shows they would be removing the trees on Burdick and replacing them with new ones in similar locations. On Lovell St, during the demolition of the old clock tower there were two trees that were destroyed during the demolition. They will be replacing those trees.

Mr. Kakoczki stated they need to remove the trees fairly quickly because they need to get the foundation in before the weather gets too bad.

Mr. Cooper asked if they would be removing all the trees on Burdick or just up to the building. Mr. Masek stated they would be removing all five trees on Burdick.

Mr. Skalski asked what the type of trees were being removed. Mr. Cooper stated they are lindens and pears. Mr. Cooper stated most of the trees are not in very good condition. Only two of the trees are in fairly good condition. It's a tough growing area with the amount of salt that is used in the winter, the environment, it is a small growth space, and snow removal impacts them as well.

Mr. Dorr went through the list of trees on Burdick and discussed the condition of the trees. Pictures of the trees were provided to the committee.

Mr. Dorr continued to discuss the condition of the trees on Lovell. Mr. Cooper stated the trees on Lovell are not in good condition.

Mr. Patchell asked what type of trees do they plan to plant. Mr. Masek stated on Lovell they plan to plant pear trees in the two current vacant tree pits. Ms. Nichols asked what type of pear and Mr. Masek responded he thought they would be Cleveland Select.

Mr. Patchell asked what type of trees they plan to plant on Burdick. Mr. Masek stated they plan to plant a smaller type of linden tree.

Mr. Dorr asked if they plan to remove all the trees on Lovell. Mr. Masek stated they plan to remove only two trees. They will be replacing those trees along with the two empty tree pits.

Mr. Skalski asked when they planned to re-plant the proposed trees. Mr. Kakoczki stated the fall of 2019.

Ms. Nichols stated the Lovell side of the Conn Building where the doors are, has a tree across the sidewalk from the doors. Her concerns was if they are moving things in/out of those doors the tree that is already damaged could possibly be damaged even more and it may be better to remove this tree and plant a new one in its place once construction is complete. Mr. Masek stated this could be done.

Mr. Kakoczki stated the site plan indicates adding drain tile to the planting boxes. He asked if this is a standard. Mr. Masek stated he did not know if this was a standard but the concern was weather the soil created a bath tub affect. Mr. Masek asked if the trees in the City has sub-drainage or is the soil good enough that it is not a concern. Mr. Cooper stated they drain well. The problem is they do not have the best of dirt. Even if you had the best soil, there is so much salt used in the winter. Mr. Cooper stated the City has never used drain tile for the trees.

Mr. Nichols asked if they were pits or is there all soil underneath. Mr. Cooper stated it is all soil underneath.

Mr. Kakoczki asked Mr. Masek since the City does not require drain tile for the trees could they go back and ask Bronson if the funds for the drain tiles could be used instead to purchase the trees. Mr. Masek asked if it has been the City's experiences that the tree pits do not get saturated, flooded, or experience the bath tub affect and does the soil drain well. Mr. Cooper stated they drain well. Mr. Masek stated with this knowledge they can ask Bronson to use the funds to purchase trees.

Mr. Kakoczki stated he noticed some of the trees around town have the rubber type mulch around the base of the trees. Mr. Cooper stated this is something DKI has done. It works better than the grates. Mr. Masek stated they have bark mulch in the plans. Mr. Cooper stated the mulch is better than the grates because as the tree grows, if it does not get maintained well, the tree will start to grow into the grate.

Mr. Patchell stated on the Lovell side if they could add a tree near the middle of the block. There currently is grass and concrete in this area. Mr. Kakoczki asked Mr. Masek if he saw any concerns with this. Mr. Masek stated it was Bronson's intent to add more landscape to this area. Mr. Masek stated it would be better to leave this area open for future landscape of this area. Their main entrance would be at the corner. Mr. Patchell stated he thought adding a tree would provide a better look esthetically and it would match the trees on the other side of the street. Mr. Masek stated Bronson plans to enhance this area and to mimic the landscape with the other side of the block.

Mr. Dorr made a motion for removal of the existing five trees on S. Burdick St. with replacement of the proposed six linden trees and removal the existing three trees on W. Lovell St. with replacement of five trees.

Mr. Masek asked Mr. Cooper if the pear trees did well in this location. Mr. Cooper stated they do well with the elements that are there.

**Mr. Skalski, supported by Mr. Patchell, made a motion to for removal of the existing five trees on S. Burdick St. with replacement of the proposed six linden trees and removal the existing three trees on W. Lovell St. with replacement of five trees. With a voice vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

#### **437 Stone St. – Tree Removal**

Mr. Dorr opened discussion for removal of a walnut tree at 437 Stone St. Pictures of the walnut tree were provided to the committee.

Mr. Austrins stated he has been at this location since 1973. This is a dental office and over the years as the tree has grown it has produced a plethora of nuts. The nuts fall on patients, on cars, and they fall on the road which is on a hill and the nuts roll down the road into the storm drain. The tree limbs are growing into the wires. Mr. Austrins stated he has hired a company who will remove the walnut tree along with two other trees from the property behind 437 Stone St. at 428 Stanwood. The tree company requires a written letter from the City allowing them to remove the tree.

Mr. Dorr stated the walnut tree at 437 Stone St. is rated at 75%. Mr. Austrins asked what the rating meant. Mr. Cooper stated it represents the overall health of the tree and the higher the number, the better condition of the tree. Mr. Cooper stated this tree has a small decay near its base, on the sidewalk side of the tree. Other than that it seems to be in good shape, there's no dead wood in it.

Ms. Nichols stated it is close to the power pole. Mr. Cooper stated there is about a foot distance between the power pole and the tree. He said the concrete was replaced but he is not sure when that happened. Mr. Austrins stated they did remove some of the roots when the concrete was replaced. Mr. Cooper stated we will see how the removal of the roots will affect the tree over the next few years.

Mr. Austrins asked who is liable if someone is hurt from the falling walnuts. Ms. Nichols stated it is a City tree so the City would be liable.

Mr. Cooper recommends removing the tree limb over the parking lot and trim branches over the road. Ms. Nichols stated she was not in favor of removing the tree.

Mr. Dorr asked for a motion to remove the tree limb over the parking lot and trim the branches over the roadway to appropriate levels.

**Mr. Skalski, supported by Ms. Patchell, made a motion to approve the removal of the tree limb over the parking lot and trim the branches over the roadway to appropriate levels. With a voice vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

**G. OLD BUSINESS**

**345 Michigan Ave. – Along Academy St. - Removal and Replacement**

Mr. Dorr stated there was root problem from the two gum wood trees at the First Congregational Church at 345 Michigan Ave. The City was able to jet out the one storm drain line. That drain line is now clear. They discovered the other storm drain line is broke and will need to be repaired. They plan to reline this drain line to prevent the roots from coming in again. Mr. Dorr reported they were able to save the trees.

Ms. Nichols asked if the church had any more water problems. Mr. Dorr stated they have not had any other problems.

**H. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**I. BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. Nichols stated she needs to coordinate Consumers Energy work with the City. She stated she has some circuits going in and she wants to let the City know the roads where they will be doing clearing. Mr. Cooper stated he would like to work as a team with Ms. Nichols. Ms. Nichols stated the area where they will be predominately working is on Phillips Street and Portage Street, north of the service center. Ms. Nichols, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Dorr reviewed the city map, discussed and marked where the projects will take place.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Dorr adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Submitted by: Karen Rutherford Date: 2-12-19  
Recording Secretary

Approved by: Orvin Dorr Date: 3/12/19  
Staff Liaison