City of Kalamazoo
TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes
December 1, 2020

Zoom Webinar

Members
Present: Anthony Ladd, Public Works Division Manager, COK
        Brian LaBelle, Forester, COK
        Patrick McVerry, Deputy Director - Parks & Recreation, COK
        Deborah Nichols, Forester, Consumers Energy
        Steve Skalski, Asst City Engineer, Water Dept., COK
        Brian Vogl, Forester, Consumers Energy
        Gail Walter, Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC)

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Curt Aardema, avb
        Kristen Greenwood, Consumers Energy

A. ALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Ladd called the Zoom Webinar meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Committee Chair Ladd completed roll call and determined the aforementioned members were present.

C. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Committee Chair Ladd introduced guest:
- Curt Aardema, avb
- Kristen Greenwood, Consumers Energy

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By unanimous consent the Committee adopted its meeting agenda as presented.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 6, 2020)

Committee Member Skalski, supported by Committee Member LaBelle moved approval of the October 6, 2020 Tree Committee Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

F. NEW BUSINESS

400 Rose Street – Phase 2 – Tree Removal - avb
Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for tree removals at 400 Rose Street, Phase 2 Project.

Mr. Curt Aardema, with avb, stated they have partnered with the Hinman Company on a new project plan on the Northeast corner of Cedar St. and Park St. They are building a second residential building, immediately west of Phase 1. It is their intent is to keep the design and materials for the new building consistent with Phase 1, which includes LEED certification, green roofs, extensive landscaping, and new trees along the streetscape. The new building will provide 101 new apartments to the downtown and feature underground parking. He stated to construct the new building there are seven existing trees in the right of way they are requesting to be removed and replaced.

Mr. Aardema explained the group of seven includes three small ornamental trees along Cedar Street, two midsized trees along Cedar Street, and two mid-sized trees along Park Street. The northern tree along Park Street has been damaged and does not appear to be healthy. They have explored the removal of street parking spaces to preserve two of the mid-sized trees, but it’s not feasible since the building is built to the sidewalk and a crane will be needed for construction where the trees are located. He stated they propose to plant 10 new trees. The details of the plantings were indicated on the landscape plan that was presented to the Committee.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if the reason for the request was because of construction. Mr. Aardema stated they are constructing new sidewalks with snow melts and adding parking on both Cedar and Park. The existing trees will be in the way of the crane to build the building. They cannot place the crane on the backside of the building because there is an underground parking structure that will not hold the weight of the crane.

Committee Member LaBelle noted the tree on the north corner has some deadwood and decay in it.

Committee Chair Ladd expressed concern with the planting of a tree at the corner near the stop sign. The planting should not be any closer than 25 feet. Mr. Aardema stated they are open to suggestions. A discussion followed.

Committee Member Walter stated she the Norway maple at the corner is a valuable tree. She asked if there is way to keep this very mature tree. She stated she could provide a list of alternative plantings for the other trees. Mr. Aardema started he would welcome any suggestions and asked her to get a list to Committee Chair Ladd. He noted the area is an extremely tight spot for construction and the tree will need to be removed. He stated they could try to replant the tree, but they have not found a way to do that yet.

Committee Chair Ladd asked if the spaces are adequate for survival for the tree species listed to be planted. Committee Member Nichols stated they will need to look at the potential crown space for those trees. Mr. Aardema stated they have a full landscape architect team who look at these issues and he is confident they are considering this.

Committee Member Nichols stated the sugar maple will have to go due to root damage that will happen with the construction that is going to take place around it.
Committee Chair Ladd suggested the Committee table the decision to have further discussions at a later time internally. Committee Member LaBelle agreed. Committee Member Walter will be making different species suggestions to the current landscaping plan.

Committee Member LaBelle stated there are several spaces to plant trees in the surrounding area since they are limited to space in front of the building. He suggested putting in a guarantee clause that the trees planted will survive.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to table the decision until next month’s meeting so they can have further discussions internally. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**Prairie Avenue Between W. North Street and Blakeslee Street – Tree Removal**

Committee Chair Ladd opened discussion for the tree removals at Prairie Avenue between W. North Street and Blakeslee Street. He noted this is a partnership between Consumers Energy and the City to provide adequate streetlighting for this segment of road.

Ms. Kristen Greenwood, with Consumers Energy, stated this was a request from the City of Kalamazoo to install streetlighting along this corridor of Prairie Avenue. The location is roughly 16’ – 20’ off of centerline. It’s a very tight area. Consumers Energy will be doing the trimming and cutting.

Committee Chair Ladd stated due to safety issues they want to get lighting installed. Additionally, the grass and shrubs are growing over into the road causing the road to narrow. The underbrush needs to be cleaned up and trimmed to get the utility installed. He noted the brush will be trimmed back 16’ – 20’ back from the centerline on both the east and west sides of the road.

Committee Member LaBelle and Committee Member Vogl stated there is mostly box elder, along with some cotton wood and sumac trees in this area.

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Skalski, made a motion to allow the removal of the trees and brush. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**G. OLD BUSINESS**

**Bank Street Realignment Project – Tree Species**

Committee Chair Ladd stated this is still in the design phase and he does not have an update at this time. They are working through the design phase and should get it out to bid in the spring. They are still committed to picking the appropriate tree species and planting as many tree species for this site.
H. PUBLIC COMMENT

A voice mail from April Olene was played. She stated she lives in the City of Kalamazoo and knows Consumers Energy will be trimming trees by the wires. She is concerned they will trim the trees back too far causing the tree to die. She wants to be sure they take this into consideration.

Committee Member Nichols stated they have to provide safe and reliable service to their areas. Selected areas are based on past performance. With having some performance issues in the City primarily due to trees, they will inspect and evaluate the trees. They look at how much the tree will be impacted. If two-thirds or more of the crown of the tree is impacted by their work, they consider removing the tree. If the tree is not on private property, as in this case, they approach the City about removal. The City Forester and Tree Committee Chairperson will review the tree work. If a customer has questions, they can call Consumers Energy’s Forester to discuss any issue they have.

Committee Member Vogl stated the neighborhood from which they have received a lot of calls from is the west side of Westnedge near Alcott. All tree will get the proper cuts. They hope to be done with the trimming late this year or early next year.

I. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Committee Chair Ladd stated the City started their tree plantings and hazardous tree removals for this year and it’s going very well.

J. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member LaBelle supported by Committee Member Nichols, made a motion to adjourn the Tree Committee meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Submitted by: [Signature] Date: 1-12-2021
Recording Secretary

Approved by: [Signature] Date: 1/12/21
Staff Liaison
234 W. Cedar, LLC and Park @ Cedar, LLC

24 November 2020

Karen Rutherford  
City of Kalamazoo - Public Works Division  
415 E. Stockbridge Ave.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

RE: 400 Rose, Phase 2

Dear Karen:

We are excited to be in the planning process for a new investment in downtown Kalamazoo. Since completing Phase 1 of 400 Rose (located at the southwest corner of Rose and Lovell streets) in March of 2020, we have been busy working to fill the building and bring new residents to our community’s downtown core. Despite the economic challenges related to COVID-19, 400 Rose is approaching full capacity, which has prompted us to explore a second building.

The new building is proposed for the northeast corner of Cedar and Park streets, immediately west of Phase 1. Our intent is to keep the design and materials for the new building consistent with Phase 1, which includes LEED certification, green roofs, extensive landscaping, and new trees along the streetscape. The new building will provide 101 new apartments to the downtown and feature underground parking.

To construct the new building, however, we will need to remove seven existing street trees from the right-of-way area along Park and Cedar streets. We worked diligently on the Phase 1 building to save a 100+ year old English Oak tree at the corner of Cedar and Rose streets. Through consultation with an arborist and protective measures during construction, this tree was preserved and continues to anchor the corner at that intersection. We have attempted to save several existing street trees for the second building, but the constraints of the design and construction staging will not permit that objective to occur.

There is a total of seven existing trees in the right-of-way that we are proposing for removal and replacement. The group of seven includes three small ornamental trees along Cedar Street, two mid-sized trees along Cedar Street, and two mid-sized trees along Park Street. The northern tree along Park Street has been damaged and does not appear to be healthy. We’ve explored the removal of street parking spaces to preserve two of the mid-sized trees, but it’s not feasible since the building is built to the sidewalk and a crane will be needed for construction where the trees are located.

Once the new building is constructed, we are proposing the planting of ten new street trees. The details of these new plantings are located on the attached landscape plan. Our intent is to create a “green” edge along of the public side of the project with healthy street trees and robust landscaping, as we have done on Phase 1, shown here:

Office: 4200 W. Centre Ave., Portage, MI | 269.323.2022
Thank you for your time and consideration. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Curt Aardema

Office: 4200 W. Centre Ave., Portage, MI | 269.323.2022