



## **Tree Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**

### **Members Present:**

Caleb Thompson, Consumers Energy, LVD Forestry Supervisor  
Mohith Reddy Kondlapudi, City of Kalamazoo  
Thomas Palumbo, City of Kalamazoo  
Dennis Randolph, City of Kalamazoo

**Others Present:** Patrick Schwyn, Civil Engineer, Wightman  
Alice Rowe, Recording Secretary

### **A. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Dennis Randolph

### **B. Roll Call**

Completed, quorum is present

### **C. Introduction of Guests – None**

### **D. Approval of Agenda**

Dennis Randolph made a motion to approve the today's agenda, seconded by Tom Palumbo, and the **motion passed**.

### **E. Approval of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Draft Minutes**

Dennis Randolph made a motion to approve the January 6th, 2026, meeting minutes, seconded by Tom Palumbo, and the **motion passed**.

### **F. New Business**

- a. Portage Street and Kilgore Road Sidewalk Projects

Patrick Schwyn of Wightman reported that he has been working with the City of Kalamazoo on this project for the past three years. The project involves reconstructing

approximately three-quarters of a mile sidewalk along Kilgore Road, extending from Milham Park Drive to the MDOT office, and then continuing along Portage Road to Lakeway Avenue. The proposed sidewalk will typically be six feet wide and constructed just beyond the curb line.

Approximately 22 trees will be impacted by the project. One tree along Kilgore Road conflicts with a proposed bike parking area that will include a bike rack and repair station. Most of the impacted trees are located along the Milham Park Golf Course fence on Portage Road, with the majority clustered at the north end of the Milham Park property along the existing tree line. The sidewalk alignment in this area was selected to avoid steep roadway slopes and to place the sidewalk on flatter terrain, minimizing grading impacts to the golf course.

During project development, it was also determined that the existing fence line along Milham Park is in poor condition, with sections falling over and interfering with construction. As part of the project, a new fence will be installed inside the sidewalk alignment to separate the sidewalk from the golf course. It was further noted that some trees have grown into the fence line and will need to be removed.

Patrick stated that the project plans include the planting of new trees along Portage Road; however, the exact replacement ratio has not yet been determined. Potential planting areas within the park have been identified in an effort to maintain existing screening. He added that many of the trees proposed for removal are already partially broken, several dead trees, or are otherwise in poor condition.

Dennis Randolph suggested that street lighting also be incorporated into the project, noting that this could be discussed further at a future meeting. Discussion ensued.

Caleb Thompson made a motion to approve the project plan presented by Wightman for open discussion and action by the Committee. The motion was seconded by Tom Palumbo and the **motion passed**.

Tom Palumbo reviewed the trees proposed for removal to determine an appropriate replacement ratio. Discussion ensued regarding the size, height, species, and quantity of both the removed and replacement trees. Tom stated that he would support a **2:1 replacement ratio**, rather than a 3:1 ratio, based on the limited planting space available once the sidewalk is installed. At a 2:1 ratio, a total of **44 replacement trees** would be required, with **15 trees designated for Kilgore Road** and the remaining **29 trees** to be planted along the golf course side and several on the opposite side of the street. Discussion ensued.

Dennis Randolph asked Patrick if he could identify the tree locations on a map so Consumers Energy can review and provide input on the proposed plantings. The Committee requested that at least five (5) different tree species be included. It was also

suggested that Brian LaBelle conduct a field review to determine whether additional trees could be preserved beyond those currently anticipated for removal.

Caleb Thompson made a motion to approve the removal of 22 trees to accommodate the new sidewalk. At a 2:1 replacement ratio, a total of 44 replacement trees will be planted. Fifteen (15) of these trees will be planted along the Kilgore Road portion of the project, with the remaining 29 trees primarily located along Portage Road on the golf course side, as well as several on the opposite side of the street.

The final replacement count is subject to the field review to be conducted by Brian LaBelle. A tree placement map shall be provided by Wightman prior to planting.

The motion was seconded by Tom Palumbo, and the **motion passed**.

b. Update on Consumer Energy's Canopy Trimming

Caleb Thompson from Consumers Energy distributed maps illustrating areas where overhanging canopy will be removed above the low-voltage distribution (LVD) primary lines. This work applies to three-phase lines connecting one substation to another.

Caleb reviewed the maps with the Committee, identifying the targeted areas for canopy removal. The darker hash marks on the maps indicate the specific locations where canopy removal is planned.

Dennis Randolph asked whether there would be public communication regarding the planned canopy removal. Caleb Thompson stated that notification letters would be sent only to addresses directly affected by the work.

Dennis Randolph requested that the communication also specify how debris will be handled. Caleb Thompson confirmed that the standard language would be included, noting that material measuring four inches in diameter or smaller will be chipped, and material larger than four inches will be cut into firewood-sized pieces and stacked neatly on site. Discussion ensued.

Caleb also distributed photographs illustrating before-and-after examples of the anticipated canopy removal and trimming work.

**G. Old Business** – None

**H. Action Items** – No Update

**I. Public Comment** - None

**Committee Comments** - None

**J. Adjournment**

Dennis Randolph made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Caleb Thompson, **and the motion passed**. The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Liaison