MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
JANUARY 9, 2019

The Michigan City Tree Board met in a regular meeting in the Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall Building, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Wednesday, January 9, 2019, 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 approximately 6:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL
Members present: Connie Anderson, Barbara Ginther, William Ginther, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff

Members absent:
None

Staff present:
City Forester Adam Garza, Planning Department Administrative Assistant Debbie Wilson

Staff absent:
None

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
At the December meeting the nominating committee submitted the slate of officers for nomination: Mick Wulff, President; Laura Kalk, Vice-President; Barbara Ginther, Secretary.

The floor was opened for nominations.

Ms. Henderson nominated the same slate of officers as in 2018.

There were no other nominations; nominations were closed.

Motion by Mrs. Anderson – seconded by Mr. Ginther approving the nomination of officers for 2019 – Mick Wulff, President; Laura Kalk, Vice-President; Barbara Ginther, Secretary. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Barbara Ginther, William Ginther, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 7; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.
Officers for 2019 are Mick Wulff, President; Laura Kalk, Vice-President; and Barbara Ginther, Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the December 8, 2018 minutes.

Motion by Mrs. Ginther – seconded by Ms. Henderson approving the minutes of December 8, 2018 as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Barbara Ginther, William Ginther, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 7; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ended 12/31/18.

Motion by Mrs. Ginther – seconded by Mr. Ginther approving the financial report ended 12/31/18 as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Barbara Ginther, William Ginther, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 7; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.

CLAIMS
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims for January.

Motion by Ms. Henderson – seconded by Ms. Kalk approving the claims for January as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Barbara Ginther, William Ginther, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 7; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS
(None)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach
(Gardening/Landscaping)
Ms. Kalk indicated that people can continue with tree trimming for the safety of the oaks now that the weather is cold. She emphasized the importance of making sure contractors are fully insured.

City Park Trees
Mr. Garza reported that NIPSCO will continue tree trimming all winter long.
Ms. Henderson asked if NIPSCO is doing the mass tree cutting on York Street.

Mr. Garza replied affirmatively.

Mrs. Anderson asked if the Downtown holiday tree lights will be taken down or if they will stay on.

Mr. Garza stated that they will be left up all year round, at least for 2-3 seasons before they need to be restrung.

Mr. Wulff talked about NIPSCO trimming trees and told Mr. Garza that if he feels there is a tree that should not be removed, he should stand firm on having them just trim it. Mr. Wulff said he understands the clearance standard NIPSCO must follow, but said they sometimes exceed it.

Ms. Henderson pointed out that they are not trimming the trees on York Street, they are taking them down to the ground.

Mr. Garza replied that they are taking them down to a stump and then grinding the stumps out. He said he is working out a deal with their forester on a 2 for 1 match program. He said it is going well, but details still need to be worked out. NIPSCO does not want large trees under their infrastructure any more. After many years of trimming the trees they start causing issues for everyone and can get diseased.

Mr. Wulff stated that the Board understands that but said in the same standard a tree that is one foot off the City easement is just as liable to fall on the wires as the one that is one foot on the other side of the sidewalk too. He said they must play the devil's advocate on both sides.

Ms. Henderson said she understands why they are cutting down the trees under their lines but pointed out that the other side of the street is all graveled for parking, so it ends up being a block with no trees on it.

Mr. Garza said he understands that in the past the City had allowed graveled parking areas for off-street parking on the City right-of-way for residents, but it is not their current policy anymore. There have been discussions about what to do with these areas when streets are redesigned and the use of pavers for those areas to still allow for storm water infiltration.

Ms. Henderson pointed out that gravel is permeable, but even with the use of pavers there still would be no trees.
City Street Trees
Mr. Wulff told Mr. Garza that there needs to be a meeting with Mr. Loggins about the project along Old Grand Beach Road. He said he has not seen Loggins out there since the last time they talked. Mr. Wulff said he is taking it on social media and people are complaining that the stumps are 3'-4' high, there is stuff that hasn't been done, and there are topped trees. Mr. Wulff said the job needs to be done a.s.a.p. or they will get someone else to do it. He pointed out that this is the entrance into a lot of communities (off U.S. 12 going into Michiana Shores). He said people have accepted why the project is being done but they are not accepting the current clean-up going on. Mr. Wulff said the whole job is still a mess and he wants it done.

Mr. Garza asked what Mr. Wulff anticipates happening after the trees are removed.

Mr. Wulff said that the area is not suitable for planting trees because Amtrak will continue spraying and any new trees would have the same demise.

Mr. Garza agreed that Amtrak will continue to spray.

Mr. Wulff explained that when Amtrak sprays their defoliant on the tracks, the overspray destroys the one side of the trees. Then they come back through and trim away the all the dead wood on the trees which makes them heavy on the street side causing them to fall into the street.

Ms. Kalk added that it has been a consistent mess with dropping branches and falling trees.

Grant Application and Maintenance
Mr. Garza reported that he applied for numerous grants but has not heard anything back yet. He said some deadlines have been extended due to administration issues with the government shutdown.

Purchasing and Tree Planting
Mr. Wulff asked the status of the funding appropriation for 2019.

Mr. Stimley stated that the proposed appropriation was on first reading at the last Council meeting. It will go before the Council again on second and third reading.

Planning Department
(Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Redevelopment Commission minutes are provided to the Tree Board via email from the Planning Department to keep Board members informed of upcoming projects)

Mr. Wulff stated that he, along with Ms. Henderson and Mr. Garza attended a Council workshop on the proposed ordinance amendments. He said they were well received.
and that the biggest notable takeback from the meeting was the inventory of any trees 6" or larger. He said it was at originally at 3", then 10" was proposed, but they were receptive to 6".

Mr. Garza said the 6" never made it to the edits, so it is still at 10". He said he talked to Councilman Don Przybylinski who wants to make an amendment to 6" as he does not like the 10" either.

All agreed it should be 6".

Ms. Henderson asked about the limit to hardwoods.

Mr. Garza said he gets why they generalized hardwoods but felt there needs to be something about conifers and their value. It would be up to the Board to decide what the deviate is for conifers, and if it is just conifers or if it would be narrowed even further.

Mr. Wulff suggested anything greater than 12"-14".

Mr. Wulff asked Mr. Garza to draft a letter to present to the Council with the Board’s recommendations of trees 6" or larger and the inclusion of conifers.

Mr. Garza said he was hoping the Council would recognize that developers want the short up-front money and don’t want to make it up in the back end of the project. Mr. Garza wanted it to be clear that with these regulations in place the City is not trying to hurt the community and in fact what they are doing will make value to their property – on the back end it can be sold for more because now it is aesthetically pleasing property.

Mr. Garza and Mr. Wulff talked about being pleased with the support the Board is receiving from the City Planner on the tree protection for the city.

**Urban Forest Plan Maintenance**
(No report)

**Tree City Designation Maintenance**
Mr. Garza stated that he applied and got confirmation back that the information was completely filled out.

**Goals**
(No report)

**OLD BUSINESS**
(Workman’s comp for insurance)
Mr. Wulff reported that he has not yet heard back from the City Attorney but will follow-up.
(Application for planting in tree lawn)
Ms. Kalk stated that the basic application information has already been drafted by herself and Ms. Henderson but said that she did more research since the last meeting. She pointed out Ordinance 3944, specifically Section 19 and permit fees, and questioned if this is something that the Board would want included in the application as well. She noted that the permit information in this ordinance is not included in the ordinance that is on line and she therefore suggested more research needs to be done before determining which guidelines to go by.

Ms. Henderson also pointed out that on the website for the City Forester the “click here for application” is a dead link.

Ms. Kalk said that she, along with Ms. Henderson, will continue to solidify the application and hopefully present it at the next meeting.

(Purchasing and planting appropriation for 2019)
This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS
(None)

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
(None)

PUBLIC COMMENTS
(None)

NEXT MEETING DATE
President Wulff announced that the next regular meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT
The chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Henderson – seconded by Mrs. Ginther and unanimously approved.

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:35 p.m.

Barbara Ginther, Secretary