MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY TREE BOARD
JUNE 5, 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, June 5, 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 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL
Members present: Connie Anderson, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff (5)

Members absent:
Barbara Ginther, William Ginther (2)

Staff present:
Planning Department Administrative Assistant Debbie Wilson

Staff absent:
City Forester Melissa Mullins

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the May 1, 2019 minutes.

Motion by Ms. Henderson – seconded by Mrs. Anderson approving the minutes of May 1, 2019 as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ended 05/31/19.

Motion by Ms. Henderson – seconded by Mrs. Anderson approving the financial report ended 05/31/19 as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.
CLAIMS
The chair entertained a motion for approval of the claims for June.

Motion by Ms. Henderson – seconded by Ms. Kalk approving the claims for June as submitted. Voice vote was as follows: (Ayes) Connie Anderson, Laura Henderson, Laura Kalk, Johnny Stimley, Mick Wulff – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMUNICATIONS
(None)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach
(Gardening/Landscaping)
Mr. Wulff said he has seen a lot of trees struggling, although the oak has come out of it. The traditional sassafras got hurt; the leaves are small, and they are blooming late. It will be late before they fill out. The buds got damaged from the late season snow storms and the cold nights.

Ms. Kalk agreed that there is a delay in a handful of different trees. She said it is interesting what pushed out early and what pushed out late versus the usual routine of how it goes. Ms. Kalk recalled that at last month’s meeting she talked about damage to the broadleaf evergreens and how those plants (and azaleas) got damaged from the harsh winter winds. But by having patience and giving them time, some of them are starting to push out now, although some were lost. She suggests waiting until the second or third week of June before making the final determination that something is gone. Hydrangea is another one that is just starting to push out of their old wood. Big chunks of boxwood were lost not only from a fungal issue, but they were also fried out from the harsh winter winds as well. Also, there is boxwood psyllid which is an insecticidal issue. The small insect sucks the life out of the leaves starting at the top making it look like new growth pushing out, but it is the plant curling up. There will be noticeable webbing and spottiness on the leaves. It is treatable with horticultural oil; usually two to three applications. She also suggests applications of Holly-tone which has good bacteria and will help strengthen the plant.

Ms. Kalk mentioned that Purdue University has a Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory. She said you can apply on line to get set up to send samples in to them. She believes it under $30 to send samples and get a report back.

Mrs. Anderson added that Purdue’s students used to do landscape design if a homeowner sent them dimensions of their yard, although she is not sure if they are still doing it.
Ms. Kalk was not sure either, although she said they do offer classes through Purdue for landscape design. Ms. Kalk stated that Purdue has so many different outlets in regard to educating the public about the different issues going around; they have a great deal of information available on their sites alone.

Mrs. Anderson asked what kind of mosquito repellant is safe to use around pets.

Ms. Kalk stated that there are products with cedar oil in them. There is one by Fertiorome in their natural guard line which she said works well. It is very safe and lasts a long time. There is another product that has a garlic base which works just as well. She stated that there are also different products that can be applied which are safe after waiting a certain amount of time for the product to dry before coming in contact with the treated area. She recommends carefully reading the directions on the product label.

Ms. Henderson distributed information on sudden oak death (SOD) which has been detected in rhododendrons imported to big box stores in Indiana. Other SOD host plants include viburnum, azalea, camellia, and pieris. It affects them but does not kill them, although it can spread to oak trees and kill them.

Ms. Kalk said wilting/curling is one of the first signs.

Ms. Henderson added that another thing she just heard about is local sycamore trees that are looking sickly. It is due to anthracnose, but it is expected to clear up when the weather gets drier and warmer.

Mr. Wulff said it is the same thing that is going on with the sassafras. He said anthracnose also attacks the dogwoods, although he said they have seemed to bloom out very nicely this year.

Mr. Wulff said it does not really hurt the tree per say because the leaves will flush out again with new leaves. He said it is more of an eyesore.

Ms. Kalk commented that anthracnose is treatable with systemic fungicides but did agree with Mr. Wulff that it is more of an eyesore.

(Arbor Day)
Mr. Wulff and other Board members felt the Arbor Day event was a success. Mr. Wulff said there was a lot of help from NIPSCO; all the trees that were ordered were picked up. All seedlings were given away. Mr. Wulff stated that $65 in donations were received. He commented that he appreciated the help from other Board members at the event.

Ms. Kalk stated that they were thrilled with the tree selections this year. They had different varieties to give away.
City Park Trees  
(No report)

City Street Trees  
(No report)

Grant Application and Maintenance  
(No report)

Purchasing and Tree Planting  
(No report)

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)

Urban Forest Plan Maintenance  
(No report)

Tree City Designation Maintenance  
It was noted that the City was awarded Tree City USA for 2018.

Goals  
(fundraising efforts)  
Mrs. Anderson informed Mr. Stimley that at the last meeting the Board decided their fundraising efforts would focus on and benefit his zoo garden project.

OLD BUSINESS  
(Workman’s comp for insurance)  
Ms. Kalk did not have any updates.

(Application for planting in tree lawn)  
There were no updates.

NEW BUSINESS  
Mr. Wulff recalled a previous Tree Board meeting earlier in the year when they talked about an arrangement made with Micky Gallas for tree replacement on her property in Shoreland Hills.

Ms. Kalk stated that she went by the property and found that Ms. Gallas has planted a lot of new trees.
Mr. Wulff stated that they are not on the City tree lawn and they are not of the caliper the Board requested.

Ms. Kalk said Ms. Gallas is still in the midst of planting. Ms. Kalk asked that the Board give Ms. Gallas another month, and in the meantime, she will connect with her.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Wulff commented that the City hired a Forester (Melissa Mullins), stating that tonight is the first he has heard of it. He pointed out that the Tree Ordinance states the Tree Board is to have some input with the applicants for the position. He said he personally feels the City is hiring a person for Vector Control, not a Forester.

Ms. Henderson stated that she emailed the Mayor about that and he indicated the jobs are separated in the 2019 budget.

Mr. Stimley added that the Forester is hired through Central Services, and possibly the Mayor has a little bit to do with it. He said he was also unaware of the City hiring a Forester until tonight. He stated that the Mayor might have meant the 2020 budget, not the 2019 budget; the Council won't see anything until around August when they get the budget proposals for 2020.

Mr. Wulff recalled the subject being talked about at last month's Tree Board meeting, and at that time no one was hired yet and they didn't know what the actual criteria was for that position. He said since then emails were sent to the Mayor and he agrees with what was said but stated that it seems over the years the Tree Board was assuming this person's salary was derived 50/50 between Forester and Vector, but it is instead becoming more Vector Control than Forester, which chases away the candidates for the Forester position. He said the Forester position should be 20 hours a week and he knows that wasn't the case with the previous Forester, Mr. Garza. Mr. Wulff commented that he is still dealing with the Michiana Shores tree trimming issue, but the Street Department Superintendent won't call him back. He also felt that Ms. Mullins should have emailed the Tree Board to introduce herself and let them know what her credentials are.

Regarding the Street Department Superintendent not getting back to Mr. Wulff, Ms. Henderson suggested that he copy the Mayor on his emails to Mr. Zondor.

Mrs. Anderson felt that whoever did the hiring should have let the Tree Board know as a courtesy since they work closely with that position.

Mr. Wulff recalled the separation in duties when Frank Seilheimer was the Forester for the City. He was able to get grants, things were getting done, prisoners were used for labor to plant trees, simple trimming was done in-house by Mr. Seilheimer instead of being contracted out. He feels that the Forester should be handling the small jobs by
themselves, and that is what the City should strive to get back to. He said the new
Forester should keep a log as to what they are doing forestry-wise for the 20 hours a
week and submit it to the Tree Board. He said all this great work is being done but it is
being lost at the street level again and it is going back to the way it was before having a
Forester.

Mrs. Anderson acknowledged that since the time Mr. Seilheimer was Forester, the
position has now become two jobs – Forester and Vector Control.

Ms. Kalk agreed stating that there is no separation in the positions. Vector Control
alone takes up a lot of time.

All agreed that the jobs should be separated and that it needs to be put in the upcoming
budget that way.

Mr. Stimley pointed out that when the programs were going, and the Board got the
$50,000 appropriation, he was working hand in hand with Mr. Garza on a lot of these
things. He is not sure if it went by the wayside or if Mr. Garza kept any notes that the
new Forester may have. He commented that he was in communication with Mr. Garza
at least 1-2 times a week.

Mrs. Anderson asked if anything can be done to correct this.

Mr. Wulff mentioned that he believes the City missed their opportunity for trees when
Woodruff's went out of business. Also, he talked to NIPSCO at the Arbor Day event
about their replacement rate on trees they are removing for their line clearance
program. He said that should be the Forester's first priority to contact ArborMetrics to
identify tree replanting locations and order the replacements.

Mrs. Anderson suggested emailing Bob Zondor asking that they keep the Tree Board
informed.

Ms. Henderson stated that she was going to work with the Forester on the Wabash
Street raingardens, so she emailed Bob Zondor and copied the Mayor. She said she
did receive a response from Mr. Zondor and the Mayor. Again, she recommended Mr.
Wulff copy the Mayor on his emails to Mr. Zondor.

All agreed to try and set up a meeting to meet the new Forester and welcome her. Ms.
Kalk said she is excited that she is here and felt the Board should do everything they
can to make it a successful kick-start for her.

Mrs. Anderson said the Board does not know what her job description is and might be
expecting more than what they are telling her.
Mr. Wulff said the job description is spelled out in the ordinance, and the Tree Board should have input into the applicants. He stated that the grants received from the State require that the City have a person with the qualifications listed in the ordinance. He pointed out that the Board was requiring Mr. Garza to get his certification in one year, and that requirement will go for the new Forester as well.

Board members will email each other to determine a special meeting time.

Mr. Stimley stated that he has received a lot of calls about trees on City property, mostly dead trees that need to be taken down from the transition with Mr. Garza. He said he personally met with a couple of them and will pass the information onto the new Forester.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Janet Toyra-Smith (408 E. 8th Street, Michigan City IN) stated that she has serviceberry trees on either side of her driveway which were planted during the Elston Grove reconstruction project. The one on the west side is totally dead and the one on the east side is half dead. She said it could possibly have been caused from the salt that is put down on the streets during the winter which gets thrown up onto the tree lawn. She said another possibility is the house to the east of her (413 E. 8th Street) has a vehicle parked in front and it leaks gas and oil.

Mr. Wulff said the City could possibly replant them with more salt tolerant trees, but the Forester would make the ultimate decision on what to plant there. The information will be passed along to the Forester to possibly cut them down, so they are not an eyesore in the meantime. Planting could possibly take place in the fall.

Paul Niethammer (constituent in Michigan City IN) talked about several things. His first point of discussion was about the median just south of the Franklin Street Bridge where the City removed the trees. He also wanted to make sure that the Board was aware that NIPSCO and ArborMetrics is doing extensive city-wide (as well as into neighboring communities and counties) tree trimming work around the power lines. He cited multiple areas throughout the city. He wasn’t sure how much the City was monitoring their work and communicating with NIPSCO. Mr. Niethammer also talked about the trees NIPSCO planted along Fedder’s Alley and the fact they grew into the power lines and they have now removed them. In another matter, Mr. Niethammer recalled at a Council meeting at which Mr. Garza mentioned a canopy study. He asked if any results were produced from the baseline.

Mr. Wulff replied that he did not know, stating that it was in the process of the study. Funds had been secured through a grant and the City was supposed to go out to bid on it.
Mr. Niethammer commented that on the beacon.schneidercorp.com website there is pictometry where you can go back in time to see the different canopies in LaPorte County.

Mr. Niethammer added that he did not know what information is needed or if there is anybody to gather information. He said if the Board does not know what is going on, they can't help control or manage it.

Mr. Wulff stated that this goes back to the discussion about the full-time Forester issue. He said he had talked to Mr. Garza about the fact of needing to be more proactive when it came down to dealing with NIPSCO and their line clearing. He pointed out that if they do line clearing on private property the homeowner has the right to refuse it. That is when they send ArborMetrics (the middleman) to talk to the homeowner, and if they agree, they make them sign a work order. They cannot take down a tree unless the homeowner signs off on it. He stated that Highway 20 is State right-of-way, so the City has no say so in what they do on the State rights-of-way. Mr. Wulff acknowledged that NIPSCO has started a very comprehensive electrical line clearing program, stating that the city was in dire need of it.

Mr. Niethammer asked if anyone on the Tree Board was invited to attend the new Commission on Sustainability meetings. He said that commission might be able to support what the Tree Board is doing.

Mr. Stimley said they did reach out to him and he met with commission member Nancy Moldenhauer yesterday after the Council meeting. They have indicated someone from their group plans on attending the Tree Board meetings, but if they cannot attend Mr. Stimley would be their go-to person. Councilwoman Sharon Carnes is their liaison. Mr. Stimley will be the communication between them and the Tree Board.

Mr. Niethammer stated that besides electing officers during their first meeting they also set up four committees; quality of life (clean air and water), waste management (recycling), and a couple others including transportation (walkability, bike paths, etc.). Mr. Niethammer commented that there is a lot of recruitment for large businesses and growth, but he thinks a lot of municipalities and politicians need to look more at sustainability and quality of life. He pointed out Michigan City lost Radio Shack, the Vacuum Cleaner Center, the Shoe Repair shop, a couple marinas and marina supply stores, although he is thankful for still having B&E Marine who contributes greatly to Michigan City and the area.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**
Due to the next meeting falling the week of the Fourth of July holiday, Board members agreed to move their regular meeting to July 10th.
ADJOURNMENT
The chair entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Barbara Ginther, Secretary