Berkley Tree Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 12, 2019
7:00 p.m. – Berkley Public Library

Present: M. Grassa, R. Penkala, L. Fritsch, B. Lathrop, M. Schneider, K. Wilt, T. Losey, K. Karlis, A. Turner

Absent: D. Hennen, D. Schueller, S. Sekora

Additional: D. Mihaescu, chair of the Berkley Beautification Committee

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2019 meeting minutes reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Agenda – M. Grassa presented agenda and members approved as proposed.

Public Comments- none

Update to prohibited tree species list: M. Grassa shared the current list of trees prohibited on city easements. B. Lathrop wants to see evergreens removed from the list because he thinks there are some locations (boulevards/parks) that these should be permitted. The list includes Tree of Heaven listed. L. Fritsch asked if the city can have restrictions on private property, as some residents are concerned about the overgrowth of Tree of Heaven on neighboring properties. M. Grassa said the courts have rules that the city cannot restrict what people plant on their private property. K. Karlis shared that she checked the 1998 tree survey and there was only one Tree of Heaven inventoried on public property at that time. B. Lathrop thought the tree board could work on public education of prohibited/invasive tree species.

*M. Grassa will contact J. Grossman at the city to see if he can update the tree board webpage so links to helpful information such as the new tree ordinance and the prohibited species list are easily accessible.

Grant Information - T. Losey reported that the Michigan DNR offers grants of varying amounts every year. The application is due in September, so the board will need to focus on completing the application for September 2020. It is a matching 1:1 grant, so the city of Berkley would need to budget for this. This grant may be used for a tree survey, tree planting programs, environmental outreach, and more.

Link to grant that was discussed:
https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79134_81684_81819_81820---,00.html

*Next meeting, talk with D. Hennen about addressing the budget idea with city council.

City Tree Survey: K. Karlis continues to enter data from the dot-matrix printed spreadsheet from 1998 into an Excel spreadsheet. She anticipates having the job complete by mid-winter. Data includes location, species, quantity, general health, and diameter at chest height. Need to talk to D. Schueller at DPW to see where the new data will be stored/managed.

Discussion took place of having a city-wide tree survey next summer. Would need 20-30 volunteers. Need to train on tree identification, how to measure, etc. K. Karlis thought the MSU extension service might have students who would be able to help with this project.

B. Lathrop said a tree tape measure costs $45.
Fall Planting Sale: M. Grassa spoke with D. Schueller prior to the meeting and he said they have about 40 orders in. The Monday after Dream Cruise weekend is when they receive most of the orders.

Berkley Beautification Committee update: D. Mihaecsu shared the beautification committee went door to door recently to place flyers at homes without a tree in the easement. He estimates they covered about 60% of the city. He also said there are 13 people who want trees, but can not afford them. His committee can cover about 7 trees and he asked if members of the tree board would be willing to contribute to help make it possible for all 13 who want trees to have them. Checks may be made out to “City of Berkley” for $130.00.

L. Fritsch asked about the newly updated tree ordinance that says residents who had a tree removed on the easement by the city is entitled to a free replacement tree. M. Grassa said JD Hart company, the contractor hired by the city for tree removal/pruning, should have records from the past three years. DPW should have a list of trees removed.

M. Schneider asked if D. Schueller can bring a list of addresses where trees were removed monthly to the tree board meetings so the board can also keep track.

The tree board would like to see more transparency regarding the budget for tree planting, specifically, the money collected from builders when they remove a tree and are required to pay for its replacement per the updated tree ordinance.

*Ask D. Schueller and D. Hennen for specifics about tree budget.

New items: The board thanked L. Fritsch and student member A. Turner for the public-service video they helped create. It was shared by the city on social media and was very-well received.

Next meeting will be on Monday, September 9, 2019 at 7 pm at the Berkley City Library

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

2019 Meeting Schedule:
September 9, 2019
October 14, 2019
Tuesday, November 12, 2019 Due to Veteran’s Day on Monday November 11, 2019
December 2019 – No Meeting – Holiday Parade