Berkley Tree Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 9, 2019  
7:00 p.m. – Berkley Public Library

Present: M. Grassa, R. Penkala, L. Fritsch, B. Lathrop, M. Schneider, T. Losey, K. Karlis, D. Schueller, D. Hennen

Absent: K. Wilt, A. Turner, S. Sekora

Members of the public: Maybelle Fraser, Carol Boman

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

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 12, 2019 meeting minutes reviewed and approved.

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

Public Comments- Maybelle Fraser asked if she could make her comments at the end of the meeting. Approved.

Update to prohibited tree species list: M. Grassa spoke with J. Grossman at the city and he updated the tree board section of the website to make it easier for the public to find relevant information.  
http://www.berkleymich.org/boards_and_commissions/tree.php

M. Grassa asked D. Schueller about updating the prohibited tree species list. He said he is open to making changes based on recommendations from the tree board, but it will need to be approved by the city manager based on the current ordinance.

R. Lathrop asked about evergreens in the public easement, and suggested there be an asterisk placed next to evergreens on the prohibited species list, and D. Schueller said there are some places where that would be ok. Again, D. Schueller asked the tree board to address this change with the city manager. The asterisk would note that they may be planted under special circumstances.

*D. Schueller said he will email Judd Hart to ask if he has recommendations for any needed updates to the prohibited tree species list.

Grant Information - M. Grassa wanted to know how the tree board can get money allocated from the city budget for a matching grant. D. Schueller said the January meeting is when the general fund is discussed. T. Losey said the tree board needs to come up with concrete numbers for the amount of money needed and future goals such as funding a tree survey or increased planting.

R. Penkala asked about how the money collected from builders for trees removed from the easement is allocated and how can it be tracked. D. Schueller said it is collected by the building dept. but he doesn’t have a way to track that specific item. He explained that the money used for tree planting comes out of the “road money” received from the State of Michigan. K. Karlis said the city should be able to provide a monthly report.

*D. Hennen asked by M. Grassa to follow-up with the city finance director to find out where the specific tree money collected from builders is going.

*Tree board needs to come up with details at the October and November meetings for next year’s budget.
**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. She has completed 1,000 more lines of data entry and is about halfway done with the job.

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 and will be in contact with them. M. Grassa suggested Oakland County’s master gardener program might have people that can help as they need to collect a certain number of volunteer hours to remain certified.

The board would need to have D. Schueller ask for budget money for training and diameter tape measures. D. Schueller explained that the data would need to be entered into their GIS system by an independent contractor. Will take a few months to complete.

Discussed whether volunteers could use the DPW iPads for data entry on weekends or if personal iPads may be used. Will need to clarify.

*K. Karlis to contact MSU extension service about getting volunteers to help with tree survey.

**Fall Planting Sale:** D. Schueller said about 90 trees were ordered and many orders came in right after Dream Cruise weekend. There will be about 10 trees replaced under warranty that were planted last fall.

R. Penkala asked if any trees will be replaced on easements that were removed by the city and asked that residents be reminded that they are currently entitled to a free replacement tree if the city has to take theirs down. D. Schueller said in most cases it takes at least 3-5 years for the old roots to decompose to allow space for a new tree.

L. Fritsch shared the City of Oak Park offers free ROW (right of way) trees to all their residents.

**New items:**

**Tree Diaper update:** M. Schneider used two “Tree Diapers” at her residence for the past 8 months. It was thought this might be something the tree board could recommend to residents when they received their tree.

While initially happy with the results of good spring green-up of her two ROW maples planted in fall 2017 and 2018, early this summer M. Schneider noticed the roots were growing up into the tree diaper. It appears the silica-type gel that holds the water doesn’t allow gravity to pull the water down into the ground, so the roots naturally grow toward the water source, in this case, up toward the surface. M. Schneider has removed the Tree Diaper and resumed with regular hose-watering.

**Oak200:** M. Baumgarten forwarded a letter to the tree board for review. The Oak200 Bicentennial Committee, headed by Dulce Fuller, wants to plant 200 oak trees in Oakland county next spring. They asked the City of Berkley if it wanted to have some oak trees planted along the Woodward corridor. The tree board unanimously agreed that oak trees do not fit the idea “right tree, right place”. Concerns include the mature size and debris from acorns on Woodward being a hazard to motorists and pedestrians. D. Schueller and R. Lathrop both suggested that the Oak200 representative would be welcome to attend a meeting to share their ideas. D. Hennen thought the Roseland Park Cemetery might be a good place to plant oak trees.

*D. Hennen or M. Baumgarten please respond to Dulce Fuller’s letter.*
Public Comment: M. Fraser and her daughter, C. Boman, noticed in July 2019 a tribute tree she had planted in 1992 was removed from an area near the fire station, which is currently undergoing an expansion. She said she was told by the fire chief that the tree was healthy and could have been saved. The tree was planted in memory of Jack Duncan and the Duncan family. Two other evergreens, also tribute trees, were removed.

Ms. Fraser dropped off typed letters to the entire council, mayor, and city manager on July 27, 2019 and has not received a response. She wants the city to recognize this happened and requests replacement trees be planted.

D. Schueller acknowledged that DPW will replace the trees and will work with the city to make sure that tribute trees are not removed unless absolutely necessary. Ms. Fraser asked that in the case a tribute tree does need to be removed, that the honoree’s family be contacted prior to removal. D. Schueller will work on this in the future.

Next meeting will be on Monday, October 14, 2019 at 7 pm at the Berkley City Library

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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