Berkley Tree Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 10, 2021
7:00 p.m. – Online via Zoom
Join Zoom Meeting: https://berkleymich.zoom.us/j/98563499140
Phone: 16465588656
Meeting ID: 985 6349 9140

Absent: none
Additional visitors: J. Hart (J. H. Hart Urban Forestry), Steve Bard, Annette Wahl

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

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2021 meeting minutes reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Agenda – K. Karlis presented agenda and members approved as proposed.

Public Comments - none

Sidewalk Replacement Program - J. Hart talked to the Board about the Coolidge Road project and what the Tree Board recommends be done about the Locust Trees that currently line Coolidge on both sides of the street. These trees have caused problems with the sidewalks and if we replace sidewalks in these areas and leave the trees the sidewalks are likely to be damaged again. K. Karlis reminded the Board that the Tree Board really does not have a say in these types of decisions, however we can share our thoughts about what direction we would like it to go. Questions about the City Master Plan and how the future designs of Coolidge might also affect these trees and future plantings. K. Karis said she would like the Tree Board to be involved with future discussions about these decisions. The Street Scape decision for the Master Plan identified trees as an important part of the landscape design. The trees we decide to plant in the future will have a positive impact on the sewer system problems in Berkley. D. Hennen asked if we would have planted a different species of tree would we still have this problem or is it any large tree cause the problems switch the sidewalks? J. Hart said that dwarf trees can help with this problem in the future. M. Leneway suggested that we place pea gravel under the trees for planting as it can help them live longer. Also, rebar in the sidewalks can also be helpful in these settings. K. Karlis suggested building grates which still allows trees to grow without damaging pavement. D. Schueller said DPW is looking at that at Vibe. Pilot program on the side street. D. Hennen mentioned a product called Structured Soil we might consider as we plant future trees in Berkley. D. Hennen asked if we could remove these trees a little at a time instead of all at once. The DDA has agreed that they do want some sort of trees in the downtown areas on 12 and Coolidge. J. Hart said that he does love trees and would rather care for trees than take them down, but to make Coolidge sidewalks safe we do have to take these trees down. K. Karlis said we will have this topic back on our agenda in July. D. Hennen shared that the DDA is also talking about Pocket Parks in Berkley. D. Hennen said that a small group needs to sit down to decide what needs to be decided about this topic.
**Berkeley Tree Ordinance** - K. Karlis mentioned that as discussed in the last meeting, tapping trees for maple syrup was not a good idea. Matt Baumgarten has since been advised and will not issue waivers for this going forward. The current Tree Ordinance is much broader in scope than just maple tree tapping and states that “No person shall use any public tree as an anchor. No person shall fasten or hang any material of any kind to any public tree.” Exceptions are allowed for holiday decorations, which should be temporary, or when “special permission is given a residential owner by the city manager or designee”. K. Karlis shared that there is a huge piece of metal nailed all around the trunk of one large tree. D. Schueller shared it may be someone is using it to prevent critters. J. Hart said it is still not allowed and he will check this specific tree out. J. Hart shared that in Birmingham residents were injecting trees to try to prevent Dutch Elm disease. However, this can injure the trees and the Birmingham residents were asked to stop this activity. Maple Syrup tapping, nails and critter control can kill a tree. J. Hart said this needs to be a zero tolerance for City of Berkley Trees. We should take a very firm stance to this. K. Karlis asked each Tree Board member to share their opinions about this matter. M. Leneway said that he does not have a concern about maple syrup tapping trees. He said he would assume those doing this are knowledgeable. J. Hart, however, said that he did not support maple tree tapping as the trees could be damaged if residents did not do this correctly. B. Lathrop said some residents have tapped Silver Maples and these do not seem to heal as well as the sugar maples. Most Board members feel that ribbon around trees are ok as they are loose and easy to remove. Most Board members agreed that that mechanical fasteners, such as nails used to attach bird houses should not be allowed. Also discussed that things should not be tied around trees if tight and constricting growth. Swings or hammocks should also not be allowed and may be a liability issue to City if a branch were to break off into the street. It was agreed that the Berkley Tree Ordinance should be enforced if the tree will be harmed. K. Karlis suggested we approach Torri and see if we can do a communication piece to our City Residents. This would be an education piece. K. Karlis suggested we use this as an education activity where we share examples of what we are doing wrong with our trees. D. Hennen suggested we not use real pictures on the internet. K. Karlis will look at the Tree Ordinance to see if it can be revised to be clearer and she will also work with Torri for an educational component. D. Hennen said the Code Enforcement Officer should take on the responsibility of enforcing this ordinance.

**Oxford Merchant Park Tree Proposal**- K. Karlis shared that we were going to go on May 1, 2021 to review the species in the park. We decided to hold as there was construction work being done on the park that day so we will meet on May 15, 2021 instead. K. Karlis asked J. Hart if the trees had already been identified for health and species as well. J. Hart said he was not sure what had been completed but he would check this out and get back to the Tree Board Members.

**BPW Update**- D. Schueller shared that The City of Berkley has been awarded Year #31 of Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. B. Lathrop asked if there is a sticker that can be placed on Tree City signage to show the update to 31 years of participation. D. Schueller said we are going to get more aggressive for tree planting next year moving our number of new trees to be planted to 200. He said there is a new grant opportunity called Oak Stem and the goal supports storm water management. D. Schueller will share the details of the grant with the Tree Board as he learns more. T. Losey reminded that the DTE Grant Deadline is Mid-June 2021 with work done by May 2022. We can apply for that and Losey will
take the lead of preparing the grant. Derrick agreed that he will support her with the budget and other details.

2021-22 Budget: D. Schueller has asked under the general fund for $10,000 for the DTE 1/1 matching grant for tree planting.

For 2022-’23 fiscal year, he asked for $15,000 to apply for a 1/1 grant for tree inventory/forestry grant.

J. Hart announced that all the road trees have been trimmed throughout the entire city. The process will begin again, and the Parks need to be addressed in the future.

**Tree Guide Book- B. Lathrop:** B. Lathrop is putting together a book to update the document provided by Asia Dowtin and her MSU Urban Forestry students to include additional information on trees and cultivars for residents.

**City of Berkley Tree Board Terms** – Several members are due to renew so please make sure to submit your application in a timely manner. We have one opening will Molly’s departure. D. Hennen is working on attempting to stagger terms better as many of the members are ending at the same time. The City Clerk said that the applicants from the last round were purged, so it would be best for all to reapply.

Prayers for Molly Schneider as she goes through her Cancer surgery and treatment.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.**

**Next virtual meeting scheduled July 12, 2021** – We may be able to do this meeting in person depending on increasing vaccines. K. Karlis will let us know if this is possible.