

**MANISTEE CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2019**

The Manistee City Council met in a work session on Tuesday, August 13, 2019 at 7:00 pm, Council Chambers, City Hall, 70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan 49660.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dale Cooper, Lynda Beaton, Roger Zielinski, James Grabowski, Michael Szymanski and Erin Pontiac

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Goodspeed

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager, Department Directors, Public, and Media

Mayor Zielinski requested a moment of silence in remembrance of previous Manistee Mayor Lorraine Conway who recently passed away. Conway served as Mayor 1995 – 2000.

Public Comments

Janice Waterman, 1010 Maple St. – member of the Tree Commission spoke regarding the tree trimming request. The Tree Commission has acted on this same request multiple times finding the tree to be healthy and not in need of trimming.

Jen Teller, 712 Harbor Dr. – encouraged Council to form a policy to allow homeowners to trim trees on City owned property.

DISCUSSION ON WEBSITE TRACKER SYSTEM - Finance Director Ed Bradford led a discussion on the new RequestTracker found on the City's website. Bradford demonstrated the feature which allows citizens to report issues in 2 categories, Blight and Forestry. This provides the public another way to interact with the City. The City could add more categories in the future if this feature proves useful. Training is being done in the police department for using the system and following up with blight issues. Information about the new RequestTracker was included in the tax newsletter and on the City's website.

DISCUSSION ON TREE TRIMMING POLICY / JEN TELLER'S REQUEST - Mayor Pro-Tem Lynda Beaton & Councilmember Erin Martin Pontiac led a discussion regarding a request from Jen Teller to trim a tree in a City park which is affecting the view of Lake Michigan from her home. DPW Director Jeff Mikula explained that the Tree Commission visits each location where a trimming request has been made and decides whether action should be taken. The Commission has found this particular tree to be healthy and is an asset to the park and to the City. Mikula expressed concern that if the City begins cutting trees for view purposes it could lead to numerous other requests and have a very detrimental effect to the City.

Councilmembers discussed the tree trimming ordinance which specifies tree removal and trimming shall be done for public safety, right of way and health of the tree.

Consensus: Councilmembers feel that the ordinance is very clear as to the request process and that the Tree Commission has followed ordinance procedures in handling the request. No further discussion is necessary.

OTHER:

Grabowski asked if anything was being done regarding the Café 1907 sign. City Manager Taylor reported that police are poised to act on enforcement of a civil infraction. Grabowski also asked about a blight issue on Twelfth Street in a Housing Commission residence. Taylor has reported the issue to the Housing Commission and further action would need to come from the police department.

Pontiac inquired whether local Air B&B rentals are required to be registered with the City's Rental Inspection Program. City Engineer Shawn Middleton stated that there are some Air B&B rentals currently registered, however it is difficult to determine additional rental locations in the City without registering as a renter on the Air B&B website. Taylor reported he is following pending legislation which would limit local governments' ability to control short-term rentals. Pontiac also asked for an update on the tennis courts project. Middleton said that his office is working on specs for the bid process. Mikula reported that there has been a citizen donation made toward the project to fund an additional feature to the courts.

Szymanski asked whether the City could do anything about the poor condition of private parking lots. Taylor answered that he believes the City does not have the authority to enforce improvements to private parking lots but will confirm that with the City attorney.

Cooper appreciates the work done by the Tree Commission.

Zielinski thanked the public for attending and for their input as well as the Tree Commission for doing their due diligence.

Adjourned at approximately 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Y Laurain
Deputy Clerk