

MEMO

Date: 8-11-15

To: Park and Rec Committee

From: Dan Koski, Chad Scheinoha and Alvin Rehme

Re: DPI – Proposed Forestry Action Plan and Policy

In the documents below and attached you will find a brief history from the past two years of some of the issues that we have been trying to overcome in our Forestry Division. With the use of Rapid Improvement techniques, trial and error, and data tracking we have formed an action plan and policy for citizen tree concerns and Forestry work priorities. Our hope would be with your approval to enact this policy formally. This will help us to provide better customer service by having an accurate explanation for the citizens about if and when their tree issue/s will be addressed. It will also help us to prioritize tree tasks in the Parks and Forestry Division of DPI. Short term, this policy will address our issues that we are having; however there will need to be other steps taken to provide long term, good, Urban Forestry Management for our citizens. Below you will also read about some of these possible long term solutions.

We have logged, averaged and estimated that our division receives between 200 and 300 calls per year related to Forestry or tree issues. With this volume of citizen concerns it has been very difficult, if not impossible to provide an accurate and timely response without some form of structured policy or procedure. With our current labor dedicated to forestry (explained below) since fall of 2013 we have averaged a removal rate of about 60 trees per year. You can see that this falls far short of the public requests for trees. There is also a safety risk that is being created by not addressing trees timely.

As of June 23rd 2015 the following is a status of Forestry data.

- 140 open tree issues
- 106 are removals
 - 37 have not been inspected yet
 - 38 are 4-D trees (tier 1 and 2)
 - 31 are (tier 4) removals
- 17 are ordinance violations (tier 3)
- 17 are trimming concerns (tier 4)

Currently we have 5 staff in our parks division of DPI. We do our best to spend an average of 48 man-hours (3 person crew – 2 days per week) on tree cutting/trimming and 8 man-hours on forestry admin work per week (citizen follow ups – tree inventory updating). 95% of this time is spent reacting to current issues and about 5% actually maintaining or planning. Which amounts to about 2.5 man-hours of maintenance/planning per week (maybe) for about 40,000 (terrace trees and park trees) city owned trees.

We believe this policy will be great progress from where we were at 2 years ago. Our City Forester has done an outstanding job at organizing this area of the division and dealing with all tree issues. However, it is still very frustrating to us that we cannot dedicate the time needed to

maintain a good program, while still keeping the parks operating and in good condition. We also have great concerns about our city trees and tree management now and into the future. We are not sure that there is an answer right now, but we have thought about some options. Below are concerns and options that we will pursue in the future for long term solutions.

- We are doing very little proactive planning or maintenance for our tree/urban forest management.
 - Street clearance trimming for our 14' ordinance
 - Sidewalk clearance trimming for our 10' ordinance
 - Park and trail trimming
 - Planting/replacement of trees
 - Planning for EAB
 - Planning for long term urban forest management (as trees reach end of life/replacement schedule)
- Possible options to improve
 - We are requesting an additional \$6k in the sidewalk program for 4-D tree removal in 2016
 - More money/increase operations funding – hire contractors – we are requesting an additional \$20K in 2016 for this purpose
 - More staff – when you compare us to other cities, at a minimum, we should have a full time forestry crew.
 - DNR grants – Alvin and Chad are planning to attend a DNR webinar in September to help learn about these grants
 - Other grants – we have received one already and will be applying for this one again
 - Volunteers with insurance to cut selected terrace trees. Would work closely with the city forester
 - Select logging and timber sales from parks to generate revenue for the forestry program

Please take a look at the attached draft policy. In closing, we would ask that you support our recommendation to adopt the attached policy for the Parks and Forestry Division of DPI as a short term solution to many of the issues that the citizens of Manitowoc are dealing with associated with trees.

Dan Koski
DPI Director

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Operations Division Manager

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