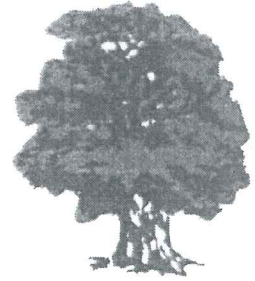


15-903



City of Manitowoc Tree Commission

Manitowoc, WI



August 24, 2015

To: City of Manitowoc Park & Recreation Committee
From: Todd Holschbach, Chairman of and on behalf of the Municipal Tree Commission
Subject: **Support for Priority Policy & for Increased Resources for Forestry Issues**

We are writing to express our unanimous support for the Parks and Forestry Division's Tree Maintenance and Removal Priority Policy. We also write to express our full support for addressing the ongoing need for increased resources for the Parks Division—with an emphasis on the need for tree cutting and trimming staff and resources.

Over the past several years, the Municipal Tree Commission has observed an ongoing decline in the City's ability to address the tree cutting and trimming needs/requests of residents in a timely manner while also addressing its own public-area needs. Equally concerning are the safety and liability risks that accompany this lack of resources. Compounding these issues is the inability of the over-stretched Forestry Division to do proactive planning and maintenance.

The proposed Tree Maintenance and Removal Priority Policy is a step in the right direction, especially given the lack of resources currently available to address the City's urban forest needs and responsibilities.

But we also ask that you strongly consider supporting increased near-term and long-term funding for sidewalk program tree removal, increased staffing (at least a full time forestry crew) and increased funding for contracting services.

It is important to note that membership of the Municipal Tree Commission approaches this ongoing problem from multiple citizen perspectives/backgrounds—and as a full commission, are uniquely qualified to make these requests.

Finally, we want to stress that this is not an issue of allowing residents to engage in the city's tree removal responsibilities or for getting current staff to work harder/put in more hours ; we unanimously support the exceptional work the Parks and Forestry Division staff have done in this era of under-funding.

Thank you for your consideration.