

VILLAGE OF MICHIANA
Tree Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 1:00 pm EST

The meeting was held in person at the Village Hall.

ATTENDEES

Council member Nancy Thill Tree Commissioner, called the meeting to order. Also present were Andrew Aronson, Anne Blasko, Rick Reitz and Karen Szyp.

HIGHLIGHTS

Rick Reitz reported that he is talking with a couple of tree service companies regarding a retainer contract for tree service in the Village.

Anne Blasko said she will conduct an Arbor Day Education event for the Michiana Day Camp & Vine. More to come later.

Nancy Thill briefly mentioned that the Village will move forward at the end of this year with an application for membership to Tree City USA, an Arbor Day Foundation Program. This membership provides multiple benefits, as well as funding opportunities.

Nancy also mentioned that she has spoken with US Congressman Tim Walberg, and his aides, about officiating the Village Arbor Day Dedication event in October.

Nancy led a discussion to review the first draft of the Tree Inventory performed by Great Lakes Urban Forestry (GLUF - Steve Lane). The first order of business will be to address the trimming of trees in the right of way for the safety of the Village residents and property, and the priority removals. Next would be the replacement of invasive species. Planting of new native trees will be discussed as the plan progresses. She stated the purpose of the work with GLUF is to manage diseased and dying trees, tree removals, and replacement with recommended native trees for greater diversity and a healthy forest going forward using best practices. They are certified arborists.

Nancy said she will get clarification on the recommended trees and shrubbery. The Tree Board members requested the recommended tree list be placed on the village website. She asked the board to review the first pages of the draft report and to submit comments and questions. Nancy will provide to the Board the next third of the document and appendices to follow.

The next meeting will be scheduled August 7.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Szyp

On July 13th and 14th, Anne Blasko, as requested by Village of Michiana Tree Commissioner Nancy Thill and the Tree board, led a special art project to help raise awareness of an often overlooked threat to Michiana's beautiful trees: vines. The project, "Nature Weaving; Save the Trees, Kill the Vines," lead campers 4 to 13 years old to learn about the "Oriental Bittersweet Vine," an invasive species in Michiana and across Michigan. Anne led a discussion about the trees in Michiana and how to protect them...even young campers knew about invasive species! After learning how to stop this invasive vine, the children created art weavings using Y-shaped fallen tree branches and materials found in nature. Campers took home their weavings and a brochure from the Oak and County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) of Michigan. Attached are some pictures of the project and the brochure about the Oriental Bittersweet vine.

