



Shade Tree and Beautification  
Commission Meeting

Minutes

August 26, 2025  
3:00 PM

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Matthew T. Starr	Mayor	Absent	
James Brown	Chair	Present	
Brian Ball	City Engineer	Absent	
Colleen Clarkson		Absent	
Quetin Platt		Present	
Duane Barber	Board Member	Absent	
Sarah Wagner		Present	
Laura De Leon		Absent	
Randy Pursel		Absent	
Russ Mentzer		Present	

LeNan Hagar- Board Member  
Brain Wade-Wade and Gatton Nursery  
Zane Mikesell- Engineering Dept  
Nick Johnson- Engineering Dept  
Gaby Carrol- Engineering Dept  
Scott Zimmerman- City Inspector  
Rachel Wilson- Engineering Dept  
April Brady- Water Dept  
Ann Laudeman  
Julie Brodie  
David Bonner  
Greg Yashnyk

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

- Shade Tree and Beautification - Commission Meeting - Jul 29, 2025 3:00 PM

There was no quorum. Minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Grants**

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Wade if there are any trees that have not been planted that were on the list from last year. Mr. Wade said he believes that they are all planted.

**Tree City**

Mr. Brown asked how many applications they had received so far. Ms. Wagner said there were about 30 request from August of last year to July of this year and an additional 30 from July to the present. Mr. Brown said that he may be adding someone to the TCP list to help plant trees because there may be too many for Ms. Wagner to plant. Mr. Brown has the goal of planting trees the same year that they are requested, but it depends on the budget.

**Tree Guards**

Tree Guards

Mr. Brown said that they were able to put trees guards at Ariel and Hiawatha Park. Ms. Hager, Mr. Mentzer, Mr. Wade, and Mr. Brown showed up to put the tree guards on. Mr. Brown said that they had 150 flat tree guards and when he went to pick them up, Randy had quite a few tree guards already there.

Mr. Brown said that there were some tree guards left over. He said they will use these when they plant more trees in areas where there will be a lot more deer. Mr. Brown said that when they order more tree guards, they will use the round ones because they work better and are easier to put around the trees. Mr. Brown said that they may need to put tree guards on some of the city trees because the deer are coming into the city.

**Sequoias**

Mr. Brown said that they do not have the permit for the fence yet, so they cannot plant the sequoias until the fence is up. Mr. Brown said the man from Michigan who clones large trees will charge about \$1,000 a tree, so they are not going to buy any from him.

**NEW BUSINESS*****Pear Removal***

Mr. Brown said that with the pear removal program, they have removed 15 pear trees so far. Mr. Brown said that part of the plan with the tree removal program is that they replace them with native trees. He said they may be limited on the trees that they may be able to plant because of the power lines. Mr. Brown said that he wants to use native pollinators as much as they can.

Mr. Mentzer asked if the Shade Tree Commission plants trees that are not shade trees. Mr. Brown said yes they do plant trees that are not shade trees. Mr. Mikesell said that they have to plant trees that are suitable for the site.

Mr. Mikesell asked if there is a budget to remove and replant a tree at the same site. Mr. Brown said yes. Mr. Mikesell said that there has to be an offset, but it is in the same general area of the tree that was removed.

Mr. Mentzer asked how quickly after a tree is removed that it gets replaced. Mr. Mikesell said that they are usually replaced the following year. Mr. Mentzer asked if people ever get upset when trees are removed. Mr. Mikesell said that they do, but they only remove trees if they are a hazard. Mr. Mikesell said that it is usually a pretty easy conversation to have with the homeowners because the tree may cause a hazard that will cost the homeowner a lot of money.

### ***Grant Applications***

Mr. Brown asked Ms. Carrol if the grant application for the USDA Forestry Grant has been sent it. Ms. Carrol said that the grant application will be turned in 8/27/2025 for \$47,000. Mr. Brown said that the grant targets lining the street of the industrial park. Mr. Brown said that the goal is to reduce a heat island and increase the canopy percentage within the city. The industrial park is 10% of the city's property, so a big impact can be made there to increase the quality of life for people working in the industrial park. Mr. Brown said that they scaled back the application from the past year because they are more likely to receive the grant if they ask for less.

Mr. Brown said they are also working on the International Paper Grant. This grant helps with removing and replacing the invasive pear trees. Mr. Brown said that he found a community in Indiana that has set up a program where a person can take a picture of an invasive tree and remove it. Then they will give you another tree. Mr. Brown said that they are approaching the International Paper Grant with that kind of idea.

### **OTHER**

Mr. Brown said that the City owns 6 acres and he would like to harvest some of the wood from it before it goes up for sale. Mr. Brown said that Mr. Mikesell and himself will walk through the woods and see if it would even be worth harvesting. If it is, he said Mr. Mikesell has some contractors who would come in and harvest the wood. Mr. Brown suggested that they could use the wood for when they remodel City Hall.

Mr. Brown said that once the baseball and softball season is over, they will be closing Memorial Park. There will be some trees that will be removed from the park. If the trees are good enough, they will sell the timber from them. Mr. Brown said that there will be a concession stand in the middle of the fields and there will be sidewalks leading up to them in each direction. There will be enough room on each side of the sidewalk to plant trees. Mr. Brown said they will have to stay away from the infiltration trench, but they can plant outside of it.

Mr. Brown said that they want an arch to go between Captain Hunter's Landing Splash Pad and The Kokosing Valley Rotary Playground. Mr. Brown said that he will be talking with the Metal Fab Class from the career center about making the arch.

Mr. Brown said there is a company that would like to come in and develop the land across from the Fairways condominiums. The property is almost 40 acres and 33 acres of it is woods. The company that wants to develop the land has to do a tree inventory first. Mr. Brown plans to do a zoom meeting first to get all the preliminary stuff out of the way before they show up. Mr. Brown said that they will lose a lot of trees, but the company will be required to plant trees in the yards of the houses they build and there will be some other requirements that they will have to follow.

Mr. Brown said they lost a lot of trees with the Gilchrist Estates and they do not want to make that mistake again.

Mr. Mikesell asked Mr. Brown if he has heard anything from the Salvation Army. Mr. Brown said no. He said he needs to set up a meeting to talk with them. Mr. Brown said that they are going to have Arbor Day at the Salvation Army next year because they just built a playground so they would like to put trees where they can.

Mr. Mentzer asked about the project on Martinsburg Road. Mr. Brown said that project is part of the Safe Passages to School Project. Mr. Brown said that is a federally funded project and he believes it will be a 2027 project.

Mr. Mentzer asked how someone becomes a board member of the Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Brown said that the person who wants to be on the board has to talk to the Mayor first. Ms. Loudeman said that she wants to become a certified naturalist and needs some volunteer hours.

At the Heartland Commerce Park, Area Development Foundation funded the trees that will be going in this fall. There is a contract with the Shade Tree Commission to water the trees for the first year. Mr. Brown said that there is a master plan for the parks. Shade Tree has to follow the master plan so they won't have to take out a tree a year or two after it has been planted.

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Mikesell if he has received any responses from his letters yet. Mr. Mikesell said that he has received around 40 responses. Mr. Mikesell said that the QR code expired, but there are other ways that the recipients can respond.

Mr. Brown said there was a survey done in the West End. The number one concern was a new bathroom, the second was a pavilion, and the third was a playground.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Mentzer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wager second the motion. Meeting adjourned.