

Elizabeth Dean Fund Committee

STAFF REPORT: MARCH 9, 2021

17-YEAR CICADA EMERGENCE

I recently learned of the 17-year cicada emergence that is going to take place between May and June this spring. I reached out to the Michigan State University (MSU) Entomology Department and was referred to Mr. Howard Russell, M.S. who is an insect specialist and arthropod diagnostician. After discussing this situation and potential impacts to young trees, Mr. Russell recommended the city suspend all planting activities for the spring 2021 due to anticipated damage caused by the cicadas. Staff have made the collective decision to suspend most planting activities, except for conifer species which are not a preferred species by the cicadas.

This means all the scheduled EDFC plantings will be postponed until fall 2021. Budget sheets have been updated accordingly.

Forestry is going to plant as many trees in the fall 2021 / spring 2022 to try and offset the loss of the 500+ trees that would normally be planted this spring. We're targeting 650 in the fall and spring 2022 plantings. We will continue to push to plant above the normal 500 trees each season until we are able to make up the loss of this planting season.

Staff is working with our outreach team on the creation of a webpage dedicated to the cicada emergence. This will be a clearinghouse of information for residents to use. Additionally, Forestry and the City's Office of Sustainability and Initiatives (OSI) Team are working together to host a webinar/question and answer session with Mr. Russell for residents to attend. We hope to record the event and make it available on the cicada webpage.

PROJECT UPDATES

All projects are on hold until summer/fall. Quotes will be obtained during late summer for early fall installation.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Since we cannot plant hardwood trees this spring due to the cicadas, I reached out to Hillary and Adam with Parks to see if there was interest or need for any conifer plantings in the parks. The cicadas do not prefer conifer species and MSU Entomology has confirmed we should be safe planting conifer trees. Hillary reached out to stewards of each park and received the following requests:

Community-wide Parks:

- **Gallup Park:** Between the playground adjacent to the canoe livery and Fuller Road to form a natural barrier between the playground and the busy road.
- **Veterans Memorial Park:** Evergreen screen planted between the pool and Jackson Road to block views and along the west side of the ice arena to prevent snow drifts from piling up on the building. **Note:** if they can only have one area planted, they would like the west side of the ice area.

Neighborhood Parks:

- **Arbor Hills Nature Area:** Several trees to break up the open, mowed space at the end of Ashburnam cul-de-sac.
- **Baxter Park:** screen along basketball court.
- **Burr Oak Park:** 2-3 trees to fill in holes along the property line and to break up open space.
- **Cloverdale Park:** 1 tree near the playground. **Note:** Hillary mentioned she is not sure if there's room here, but the park adopter requested a tree. She will investigate to see if it's appropriate.
- **Greenbrier Park:** 1-2 trees to replace a tree that was removed north of the playground.
- **Windemere Park:** 1-3 trees to break up open spaces.

Golf Courses and other Park-owned properties:

- **Leslie Park Golf Course:** Approximately 15 trees
- **Huron Hills Golf Course:** Approximately 15 trees
- **Bryant Community Center:** Evergreen screen along fence line (approximately 150 feet) to block views.
- **Leslie Science and Nature Center:** many trees in various locations.

If the committee would like to move forward with some, or all, of these locations, Hillary and Adam will create a Landscape Plan for each one for approval by the committee at the April meeting. The landscape plans will identify species and tree counts. Staff will then get quotes and target planting in May and June. Without an estimated number of trees, staff cannot provide an accurate estimated project cost.

ITEMS OF NOTE

1. The Natural Features Committee (NFC) submitted a University of Michigan SEAS project that was chosen by 4 graduate students to help update our Natural Features layer in GIS. The goals of the project are to create an updated urban tree canopy map for the city that classifies trees into genus or species and calculates standing biomass of tree canopy on public and private lands. A key component will be to identify native forest fragments. Materials would be built around these data to inform landowners and land managers about stewardship actions that would support the sustainability goals of the city.
2. In February I was elected President of ISA Michigan, the Michigan Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. In my role, I will lead the chapter's Board of Directors in helping set urban forestry policy and best management practices. I will represent our industries best

interest at the capitol (as needed) and be a voice for responsible and sustainable urban forestry in our state.

3. In February I was asked to sit on the Curriculum Development Team for a new Urban Forestry Certificate Program that will be offered through Michigan State University and Muskegon Community College and is part of a US Forest Service grant (\$749,000.00). This will be a new model for forestry education in underrepresented and rural communities and will build a strategic alliance for building, expanding and sustaining pathways into careers in urban forestry. This new program will provide professional development, experiential learning, and leadership training and established activities designed to promote student entry, retention, and success in the new certificate program. It is our goal to make this a replicable program for other community colleges to establish.