

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**October 15, 2018**  
**East Conference Room**

**Present:** Councilmembers Anderson, Rader & Bullock

**Also Present:** David Sangree, Streets & Forestry Manager Chris Perry, Public Works Director Beno, one member of the public, former Councilmember Cindy Marx

**Call to Order:** 6:05 p.m.

**ORDINANCE NO. 42-18 - AN ORDINANCE authorizing the Mayor on behalf of the City of Lakewood to enter into an agreement necessary to grant an exclusive easement to The Ohio Bell Telephone Company, d/b/a AT&T Ohio, for placement of and access to equipment used in the transmission of signals used in the provision of communication, video and/or information services on property located at 15538 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio.**

Director Beno stated that he is still in discussions with AT&T regarding an alternative site for its equipment.

A motion was made and seconded to defer Ordinance 42-18.

Motion passed. All members voted in favor.

Tree Topics

Mr. Sangree provided background on the former Tree Task Force and the report that it issued to Council in 2013-2014. Some members of that group continue to meet as a sub-committee of Keep Lakewood Beautiful. He thanked the City for implementing many of the Task Force's recommendations and for increasing the budget for new tree plantings. He stated that the Committee is currently seeking the following four things:

1. The Committee would like the City to issue regulations on large private property trees such as seeking City approval to remove large trees or requiring a replacement tree to be planted when one is taken down.
2. Save the large trees on the Lakewood Hospital site.
3. Install a permanent Tree Commission appointed by Council and the Mayor.
4. Subsidize and plant trees on private properties where tree lawns are too small – with resident approval.

**Planting of Private Property**

Councilmember Bullock acknowledged the progress that has been made regarding trees with the support and advocacy of the Tree Task Force. He expressed open-mindedness to the group's

additional proposals. He expressed particular interest in the proposal to add trees on private properties where tree lawns are too small.

Mr. Perry noted that there are approximately 900 such properties. If 70% of those property owners agreed to plant a tree on their property it would increase the tree canopy by 1%. The cost to the City per tree is \$283. The City would implement this over several years. 400 new trees per year is the maximum that the City can care for.

Director Beno noted that right of entry paperwork would have to be drawn up but that there is not a lot of risk to the City. He remarked further on how the process could be carried out.

### **Restricting Private Property Tree Removal**

Mr. Sangree advocated for regulations on the removal of large trees on private property and discussed examples from other cities.

Mr. Perry noted that while it is the responsible thing to replace a removed tree that there are legitimate reasons why a homeowner would want to remove a large tree such as tree hazards.

Director Beno noted additional reasons why a homeowner may want to remove a large tree such as it interfering with sewers, roofs, foundations, or gardens.

Director Beno and Mr. Perry noted that the City receives hundreds of calls each year from residents upset about a neighbor's tree that is infringing on their property. They get a few dozen calls each year from residents upset that their neighbor has cut down a large tree near their property.

### **Permanent Tree Task Force**

Councilmember Rader asked Council to weigh in on the proposal of a formal or permanent Tree Task Force.

Committee members expressed support for a permanent Tree Task Force as long as its duties and roles are clearly set forth.

Director Beno and Mr. Perry discussed the roles and duties of the City's forestry Department. He stated that many cities that have permanent Tree Task Forces are smaller in size and do not have forestry departments. These task forces waters trees, check sites and advise of tree species selection – all things that the City's Department already does.

Mr. Perry pointed to Shaker Heights as an example of a community with a tree task force focused on outreach and education.

Director Beno and Mr. Perry provided updated data on the number of trees to be planted in 2018 and the number of vacant tree lawn sites.

Mayor Summers weighed in on the topics discussed, expressing support for continued public education and outreach. He expressed skepticism about imposing broad regulations on private property trees without better understanding of the particular circumstances at each site.

Council President O’Leary added that prohibiting private tree removals could hinder home improvement projects that the City would otherwise encourage.

Former Councilwoman Marx advocated for an outreach and education role for the tree task force.

Public Works Committee adjourned at 7:00 p.m.