

Big Rapids to replace lost trees throughout city

Madison Avenue property sells

Oct. 7, 2021

Big Rapids department of public works will be replacing lost trees throughout the city with the help of a grant from Consumers Energy. (Photo courtesy of Getty Images)

BIG RAPIDS — Big Rapids city commissioners authorized the acceptance of a \$2,500 Community Street & Boulevard Tree Planting Grant from Consumers Energy administered through the Michigan Forestry and Park



Association.

“Consumers has a program to replace trees,” city manager Mark Gifford said. “They take them out from time to time, and it is nice to see they have a program to replace them. Although residents are very good about replacing trees, there are places around town where trees don’t get replaced and this is an opportunity to target some of those areas.”

The grant covers partial payment for 25 trees to be planted in public right-of-ways throughout the city.

Public Works director Heather Bowman told the board the grant will pay \$100 per tree and requires a city match of \$7,585, which will cover the remaining cost of trees along with delivery and planting services.

New Horizon Landscape has been contracted to provide and plant the trees.

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“The city will begin the tree planting in late fall,” Bowman said. “As the trees go into the ground, the city’s public works department will be responsible for watering and maintenance of the trees. Both the tree species and planting locations are in line with the city of Big Rapids

Tree Management Plan adopted in July 2020.”

LIGHTING UPGRADES

In other business, the board approved two resolutions providing for amendments to the Consumers Energy lighting contract for the purpose of replacing the streetlights at Locust Street and Woodward Street.

“When changes occur by either adding to or taking away lighting fixtures from this contract, a new contract reflecting these changes needs to be made,” Bowman told the board. Gifford said whenever the board is asked to act on resolutions for changes to the Consumers lighting contract, it means that improvements to the lighting system are being made. “When lighting issues come up, Consumers will review the lighting and make a recommendation for



improvement,” Gifford said. “At Locust and Woodward, they have older lights that are there and are strung across the intersection. We want to upgrade those to LED fixtures which is a cost savings and a higher performing streetlight.” Gifford said there have been many streetlights around the city that have been upgraded, but there are still more to do, and it will be an ongoing project. The contract calls for the installation of two LED lights at Locust Street and South State Street, and one LED light at Woodward Street and South State Street. The streetlights will be converted from high pressure sodium, center suspended lighting to mounted LED lights. SURPLUS PROPERTY SELLS Also during the meeting this week, the board approved a purchase agreement for city owned property on West Madison Avenue, near Highlandview Cemetery. RE/MAX Together realtor Joe McNally, who represents the city in the transaction, told the board that the property was well received by interested individuals after it was listed for sale. “We had three official showings and around six other visits,” McNally said. “One (interested party) made an offer immediately for over the asking price.” The purchase offer is for \$63,900, with a request that a written survey be provided to ensure the correct property lines. Gifford said an authorized survey was in the works and would be provided but questioned whether the board should wait until it was completed before taking action.

“I think this is the direction to go, but I wonder if we are moving too fast,” Gifford said. Big Rapids attorney Eric Williams said if any adjustments needed to be made after the survey was completed, that would need to come back to the board for approval, but he saw no reason why the board should not approve the purchase agreement at this time. During a public meeting regarding declaring the parcel as surplus property, some neighboring property owners expressed concerns about the potential impact of the sale on their own properties.

McNally said he reached out to the neighboring property owners to make them aware that the parcel was for sale and give them the opportunity to consider purchasing it. One neighbor showed some interest but was unable to make the purchase at this time, he said.

He added that it was his understanding that the purchaser planned to build a residence on the property.

Source: [Big Rapids to replace lost trees throughout city \(bigrapidsnews.com\)](http://bigrapidsnews.com)