

From: "Ann-Marie D'Anna" <amdk@mac.com>
Subject: Kevin Sayers - DNR, support letter
Date: November 12, 2023 at 7:55:13 PM EST
To: "Ann-Marie D'Anna" <amdk@mac.com>, Paul Kashat <kashatpj@gmail.com>

On Jan 22, 2020, at 10:19 PM, Sayers, Kevin (DNR) <SAYERSK@michigan.gov> wrote:

Hi Ann Marie, Sorry for the delay in confirming receipt of this and getting back to you. I took a 'virtual' drive around the park (via google streetview) and it is an amazing little oasis in the neighborhood. I can see the appeal of leaving it as it is to maintain the unique (undeveloped) character of a natural park setting and which is consistent with the historic appearance of the surrounding neighborhood. The letters you provided confirm this sentiment, though I imagine that there are others who would welcome some or all of the proposed improvements. There always seems to be two sides to every story. :)

Since my role with the DNR is focused on urban and community forestry, my attention and resources are mostly directed towards the trees and their management. I do work with city parks and rec. staff but not typically on matters related to park management or improvement, aside from tree issues. There is, however, a lot of overlap between parks, urban forestry and people that its often hard to separate the interplay of issues. Open, honest and ongoing discourse is where solutions are arrived at, often with compromises being made.

I would hope that the city, county and any others who are responsible for management, maintenance and financial support for the park (including improvements) are listening to the residents opinions and desires. Public input is so important and is one of the reasons we advise communities to make sure they get approval from homeowners before planting a tree in front of their house. It just doesn't make sense to waste limited resources in areas or on things that are not desired or are outright not wanted. Too many times we've seen what happens when a tree is planted where it's not wanted. It either withers and dies from lack of care or is vandalized or removed in protest. Sounds similar to the bench issue described in one of your letters.

All this is to say, I understand your and your fellow neighbors desires to keep things as they are and, if improvements are to be made, direct them towards better care and management of what's there (e.g. tree and lawn maintenance). I think the historic preservation angle will be a strong part of your case in this regard.

I'd be happy to direct you to staff within the DNR's Parks and Recreation Division for further assistance from our end. However, it seems like this is an issue of local decision and you're already working with the appropriate city/county staff and through your neighborhood group to advocate your interests appropriately. I know the Detroit City Forester (XXX) and I believe the Parks contact is XXX. Let me know if you need contact information for either of them and i'll pass it along. Also, if you're not already familiar with the Greening of Detroit, they are an excellent local nonprofit that can assist you in a variety of ways on all issues related to local tree planting, maintenance, education and neighborhood engagement.

Thanks again for getting in touch with me to share your interest and to make me aware of this park and your neighborhood group. I certainly trust that the park and surrounding neighborhood are in good hands with engaged citizens like yourself at the helm.

Let me know if there's anything else I can assist with.
My best,
Kevin S.

