



Dear Arboretum Members and Nature Lovers,

It has come time to ask for your urgent response to the Brainerd Charter Commission's decision to exclude the Arboretum from tax levy funding in which the Arboretum has been a recipient for the past 20 years. With little notice, approximately 30% of the Arboretum's operational funding will be cut off if we do not act now. For a nonprofit, this will be a devastating blow to the progress we have made within the past few years. Our operations and staff will be severely affected and will inhibit us from providing a homebase for nature-based education, recreation, and conservation. I urge you to read this memo and identify ways you can help us keep our Arboretum strong.

Recently, the Charter Commissions' position on the funding for the purpose of a "green space or arboretum" changed. As requested by the Charter, the Arboretum submitted a robust application for funding in March 2022 and was the only application submitted for our category. The Charter now believes the Arboretum should be ENTIRELY within the city of Brainerd in order to be eligible for ANY funding and are proposing this outcome to the Brainerd City Council. Where those resident-provided funds would go instead has yet to be revealed.

Our last opportunity to share our concerns about this outcome is to attend the upcoming Brainerd City Council meeting to be held on **Monday, May 2nd, 2022, at 7:30pm** at Brainerd City Hall (501 Laurel Street, Brainerd).

Your support is needed as outlined below:

- Send emails or call the City Council members and City Administrator listed below expressing your concern over the upcoming vote to defund the Arboretum.
- Attend the May 2nd City Council meeting to visibly show your support of the Arboretum.
- Attend the Arbor Day celebration (4/30) at the Arboretum and sign the petition located at the Arboretum's Membership Booth showing your support.

A few concerns to share with the Council members regarding the funding change include the potential:

- Loss of a key tourism supporting local businesses, including key community events (Arbor Day, Winter Wonderland, etc.)
- Loss of nature-based education, including children's summer nature camps and field trips for local schools
- Loss of composting facilities
- Reduced accessibility to safe outdoor environments allowing residents to gather together and enjoy nature.



- Loss of a maintained gardening space that provided a significant amount of food to various Brainerd organizations feeding those with food insecurity.
- Loss of groomed and maintained 12-mile trail system conveniently located in town.

It is important for all members to show support in any of the suggested ways. Communication from Brainerd city residents is especially valuable in guiding elected City Council members toward a reasonable solution. Together, we will make our Arboretum stronger.

Please feel free to share this information with other residents or groups impacted by this proposal.

Thank you in showing support for the Northland Arboretum.

Candice Zimmermann - Exec. Director

Bryan Pike - Board President

Council member contacts are below.

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