

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION  
COMMISSION MINUTES  
Thursday, February 18, 2016 – 9:00 a.m.  
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Chris Runge; Vice-Chairman, Daniel Downey; Members: Cynthia Schwarz, and Marilyn Black Dussault **Also Present:** Grounds Maintenance Manager, Nanette Haynes; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called today's meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) January 21, 2016**

**Mr. Downey made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2016 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Recap of Annual Beautification Weekend – February 13th – 14th, 2016**

Mr. Runge stated that he placed the Beautification Weekend yard signs all along A1A. He had a lot of people looking and he also received a couple of phone calls. He thought that next year they might put the signs out, but on the second day move them to a different location. He said he believes that it went well and asked if any of the other members received any feedback.

Mrs. Dussault said she handed out some of the flyers at her church and she was surprised at how many City residents did not know that Vero Beach is a Tree City USA town and what it stood for. She had to explain what the beautification weekend was about, because this is new and most people did not know.

Mr. Runge asked if they could do anything different next year.

Mrs. Dussault commented that they should start earlier, so they can promote it more.

Mr. Runge asked Ms. Schwarz how did the radio shows turn out that she attended.

Ms. Schwarz replied that she was told they went well.

Mrs. Dussault asked if they could have some type of contest next year and post photos on the City's website if that is allowed.

Mr. Runge said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and it might be kind of hard to judge that.

Mrs. Dussault said she would like to see more information publicize about what it means to be a Tree City USA community.

Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, said that since the website is a City function they can decide what they want to put on there. They can promote the Tree City USA information and the beautification weekend. If they take photos of people cleaning up their property and they want to post the photos then they will need to get releases signed by those individuals.

Mr. Runge asked Ms. Haynes if the Tree and Beautification Commission is in a position to fund a beautification project next year would there be an area within the City limits that she could schedule for a project. The project could be used to highly publicize the beautification weekend. It would be nice if they could get a photograph and an article in the newspaper, but they would need to have the project done before the beautification weekend. He thought they might be able to pick a Pocket Park or a smaller area.

Ms. Haynes replied that she will put together some project areas for them to select from by August.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that some picture of Ocean Drive and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue be posted on the City's website since the City is involved with those projects. It will show what the City has done to beautify the community.

**B) Update on The Million Orchid Project – Ms. Nanette Haynes**

Ms. Haynes reported that she left several messages at Fairchild Gardens, but she has not heard back from them.

Mr. Runge suggested that she mail them a letter and if she does not hear back from them then they can say they tried their best.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Tree Dedication Application – Lucy Sandifer**

Mr. Runge reported that they received a Tree Dedication application for a new Live Oak tree to be planted at Riverside Park in memory of William Rowe Sandifer.

**Mr. Runge made a motion to approve the application. Mr. Downey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**B) Arbor Day – April 29, 2016**

Mr. Runge asked Ms. Haynes if she knows who will donate a tree for Arbor Day.

Ms. Haynes replied that said she will find a nursery who will donate it. She asked if they would like to plant a tree at Leisure Square this year.

The Commission members agreed that Leisure Square would be a good location.

Mr. Runge asked if they could plant a flowering tree like a Royal Poinciana.

Ms. Haynes replied that they do not have to plant an Oak Tree, but she is not sure she could put a Royal Poinciana at Leisure Square. She will look at other flowering trees to see what will work best.

Mr. Runge recommended leaving the tree selection up to Ms. Haynes.

Mr. Runge stated that Arbor Day will be on April 29, 2016 at Leisure Square. He said Rosewood Magnet School will be contacted to invite the school children and to schedule a time for the event.

## **6. TREASURY REPORT**

None

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mr. Runge stated that he received a copy of the 2016 Urban and Community Forestry Grant and asked Ms. Haynes if she was going to submit an application.

Ms. Haynes confirmed that she also received a copy of it yesterday, but she had not planned on applying. At the last Tree and Beautification Commission meeting they discussed the 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue right-of-way area from Route 60 to the City limits. If this grant is something they want to pursue and the County approves trees being planted there, it might be a good opportunity.

Mr. Runge said the first step is to get the paperwork started and let the City Manager talk with the County to see if they can work it out.

Ms. Haynes pointed out that this grant only allocates 20 percent of the funds for tree planting, because they want to promote more of the educational aspect. She also explained that each time they receive one of these grants they receive fewer points the next time they apply. They like different groups to receive the grants.

Mr. Runge asked what if they took an established Park and turned the walking trails into an educational area.

Ms. Haynes said absolutely. They could place plaques near the trees and plants that lists the plants history. They can include colored pictures, the name, where it comes from, what the fruit or fibers are used for, etc. The grant application needs to be in by the end of March, so they need to decide if they want to approach the educational side.

Mrs. Dussault agreed that the educational aspect may help tie together the history of the beautification weekend, the importance of maintenance, Dr. Humiston who started all of this, and the fact that they are getting ready to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City.

Mr. Runge asked if the grant funds could be used to put together informational packets to be used for the Fourth Grade Forestry program.

Ms. Haynes said that may not be what they are looking for, but she can make a phone call to verify it.

**Mrs. Dussault made a motion allowing Ms. Haynes to proceed with applying for the Urban and Community Forestry grant for educational purposes. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Runge stated that he touched base with Mrs. Robin Pelensky, Mainstreet Vero Beach, but he has not met with her yet. He will try to get photos when he meets with the Mainstreet Vero Beach and the Ocean Side Business Association groups, so they can post them on the City's website.

Mr. Runge announced that he will provide each of the Commission members with a map of the City, so they can start identifying areas for developing tree canopies. An area he observed is on the west side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street south of the United Way office and near the Osceola Pharmacy.

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

### **A) Recognition of Commission/Board Volunteers – Ms. Cynthia Schwarz**

Ms. Schwarz stated that the City Council presented Mr. Karl Zimmermann with an unframed certificate recognizing his 30 years of service on the Tree and Beautification Commission. She would like the Commission to recognize him as well.

Mrs. Dussault asked how about dedicating a tree to him.

Mr. Runge stated that Mr. Zimmermann loves to travel, so he was thinking about some type of travel accessory. He asked the Commission members to bring back some ideas to the next meeting.

### **B) Tree Pruning Video – Ms. Cynthia Schwarz**

Ms. Schwarz commented that the City's Grounds Maintenance Crew always does a great job. She watched them pruning some trees along 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and thought if they could create a video it might be a great way to educate the public on proper pruning practices.

Mr. Runge asked if there are any videos available from places like the Arbor Day Foundation.

Ms. Hayes replied that she was not aware of any. She explained that every tree and branch needs to be looked at individually to determine the proper amount to prune, what angles to cut, etc. She agreed that it is easier to understand if people can see what is being explained rather than reading about it. A majority of the time it is not the homeowners who are doing the work, so we need to get the information to the people who are hired to do the trimming.

Mrs. Dussault commented that the video would not only show people how to trim trees, but that Vero Beach is a Tree City USA community and we know how to take care of the trees.

Ms. Haynes said she would check on having a video made and if they can put it on the City's website.

**C) Interactive Tree Program/Student Mentoring Program – Ms. Cynthia Schwarz**

Ms. Schwarz commented that with the fourth grade seedling program they only had one (1) girl who really participated in the contest. Her thought was to promote more of a mentoring program between the high school students and the elementary schools.

Mr. Runge suggested that Ms. Schwarz become the liaison of the Fourth Grade Forestry program for the schools and meet with the principals to see if this would work.

Ms. Schwarz said she will contact the schools. She felt that they were not hitting their mark with just the fourth grade students.

Mr. Runge suggested that the 4-H might be a good organization to contact as well.

Mrs. Dussault asked Mr. Runge if he contacted the City Council regarding forming a Centennial Committee.

Mr. Runge replied that he did address the City Council and he will follow up on that discussion with them.

Ms. Haynes said she is still thinking about locations for the Centennial tree planting and she thought it would be good to select a Park or a City property that is protected under the City Charter. She explained that the City is in the process of developing the north section of Crestlawn Cemetery and they will be redesigning the north entrance. She knows it is a little different, but the Cemetery is not going away. Her thought was to make it a more formal entrance by planting trees on either side.

Mr. Runge said that the entryway may be a viable option as long as there is room for parking if people want to visit that area without having to enter the cemetery. He said he also thought about the east side the Barber Bridge where people park when they walk the bridge.

The Commission members discussed other possible locations for the Centennial tree planting and encouraged each other to keep sharing their ideas.

**D) Next Meeting Date – March 17, 2016**

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for March 17, 2016.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Runge made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 9:52 a.m. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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