

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, September 15, 2016 – 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, Chris Runge; Vice-Chairman, Daniel Downey; Members: Cynthia Schwarz, Marilyn Black Dussault, and Barbara Leigh **Also Present:** Public Works and Engineering Director, Monte Falls, 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.

Mr. Runge asked for a motion to amend today's agenda so they can discuss item 5-A) prior to discussing Old Business.

Mrs. Dussault made motion to amend the agenda as requested. Mr. Downey seconded motion and it passed unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) August 18, 2016

Mrs. Dussault said there was something she would like to point out in the August 18th minutes. Under item 4-B) a motion was made and at the end of the discussion it said the motion passed unanimously. She thinks it should reflect that the Chairman asked if there was any further discussion, the discussion followed, and then the vote was taken.

Mr. Runge asked if there were any additional changes. No other requests were made.

Mrs. Dussault made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2016 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting with the one (1) correction made. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on Proposed Tree Planting Project along 14th Avenue from 16th Street to 18th Street

Mr. Monte Falls, Public Works and Engineering Director, reported that he has discussed this project with Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, and with City staff. They

think this is a worthwhile project, but there are a couple items he would like the Commission to consider before they finalize a concept. Currently the property is vacant, but when it is developed he wants to make sure this project is compatible with their site plan. They might want to touch base with the property owner to make sure they do not have any objections with this proposed project. He explained that the City's Master Plan along 14th Avenue includes opportunities for off street parking. If someone develops this property and wants parking along 14th Avenue they may want to consider leaving some spots for parking by clustering the trees and creating some island areas. If they plant the property owner's entire frontage it is possible that it might need to be removed when the site is developed. With today's development procedures the developer would have to have a site plan done that would show if they were choosing parking along 14th Avenue and where the landscaping would go. Since there are no plans for developing the property yet they do not know if they will want any parking. He would like to touch base with the property owner to make sure they are not doing something adverse to alter any plans for the property.

Mr. Runge agreed that is a good idea. He asked if it would be off-street diagonal parking with islands. Mr. Falls replied yes.

Mrs. Dussault asked if the land was used for any kind of development would there be a designated curb cut that could be determined now.

Mr. Falls stated that they would encourage the property owner to access the property from 17th Street, but if something in their site plan necessitated them having a driveway on 14th Avenue they would not want to deny them that option.

Mrs. Dussault said she thought that the Planning and Development Department would have curb cut rules in which they can determine where the curb cuts could be if the property owner chose that option.

Mr. Falls explained that without the property owner having an idea of how they want to develop the property and how the access would work best, he could not guess where they may want a driveway to facilitate the business. The City would not allow them to have a 40-foot wide curb cut on 14th Avenue, but different developments will have different requirements. If the owners have an idea of how it will be developed, then they may be able to make that decision. However, if they do the curb now they might restrict how the owner develops the property. The property development might require an entrance on 17th Street and 14th Avenue.

Mr. Runge asked about the installation of the covered bus stop at that location.

Mr. Falls stated that they would also want to touch base with the property owner on that item. He explained that the covered bus stops on cement slabs are typically found in front of developed properties, because they are more permanent.

Mr. Runge asked if the property is developed would the property owner be required to do a certain percentage of landscaping with trees, sod, shrubs, etc. If so, perhaps the owner would welcome the Tree and Beautification Commission's involvement.

Mr. Falls replied yes they would have landscaping requirements, but it would be specific to the property owner's site and not the right-of-way.

Mrs. Dussault asked if they stayed out of the frontage of the owner's property would this project still be doable.

Mr. Runge said knowing that there are certain setbacks for driveways from the intersection they might be able to address the corners of the property as their initial project. Once there are final plans by the property owner they may be able to do more.

Mrs. Dussault stated that since the property is on the corner of 14th Avenue and 17th Street they should still have plenty of room for their project. The project would enhance the street and the property.

Mr. Falls explained that some people want stuff in the right-of-way in front of their property and others don't, so the City tries not to put anything there without the property owner's consent. Once the property is developed, the City would expect the property owner to take care of the right-of-way all the way to the street.

Mr. Runge asked Mr. Falls if he could make contact with the property owner and look into what the Planning and Development Department says about usable space for driveways on right-of ways.

Mr. Falls replied that he would be glad to look into it and send a letter to the property owner with a copy to the City Clerk's office.

B) Vero Beach High School Students Involvement with 100th Anniversary – Ms. Cynthia Schwarz

Ms. Schwarz reported that she contacted Mr. Shawn O'Keefe, Principal of Vero Beach High School, and he referred her to Mr. Chip Humphrey, Assistant Principal of Vero Beach High School, who is in charge of the groups that would possibly be involved with this project. She was also put in touch with Ms. Nicole Mosblech, teacher at Vero Beach High School, who replied to her email stating she has one (1) group that could possibly be involved, but she wants more information before they give their commitment. She explained to Ms. Mosblech that the students would grow the trees for about two (2) years and then donate them to the City for the 100th Anniversary.

Mr. Runge explained that it would be more of them caring for the trees rather than growing them from a seedling. They will receive trees in large containers or wooden crates that they will water and take care of.

Mrs. Leigh said one (1) group that was mentioned is the Environmental Club, which she believes would be a good fit for this project.

Mr. Runge suggested they stay in contact with Ms. Mosblech, invite her to a couple of meetings, and give her updates with goals, dates, a timeline, etc.

Ms. Schwarz asked how many trees would be given to the school.

Mr. Runge said they would get one (1) or possibly two (2) trees.

Mrs. Leigh asked what other schools would be involved.

The Commission members listed the schools as Beachland Elementary, Rosewood Magnet Elementary, the Freshman Learning Center, and the Vero Beach High School.

C) Fourth Grade Forestry Program Update

Mrs. Dussault stated that she was asked to draft a proposed letter they would send to the schools outlining the project with respect to the trees. Before she drafted the letter she did some research and discovered the schools they just listed that are in the City limits are not maintained by the City. All the schools in Indian River County are maintained by the County, so she is questioning why should they be limited to interacting with just these four (4) schools.

Mr. Runge replied because those schools are within the City limits.

Mr. Downey explained that the Charter defines the Tree and Beautification Commission as a City of Vero Beach Commission and not a County Commission.

Mrs. Dussault said she understands that, but by excluding those schools that are funded by the same source as those within the City limits does not seem fair. She looked at the past City anniversary celebrations and all of the schools were involved with them.

Mr. Runge stated Mrs. Dussault is raising the point that the land the City Schools sit on is County property, so perhaps they should inquire about expanding their reach.

Mrs. Dussault suggested that they first make sure they are not running afoul of some regulation that they are not aware of. She said that with Mr. Runge's permission she would be happy to call the City Attorney's office to ask some questions. She wants to know if the guidelines of "within the City limits" was something that someone chose to establish, or is there a regulation. Personally she would love to see all of the schools participating in the 100th Anniversary celebration and the tree programs.

Mr. Runge read the paragraph from Section 2-102 - Advisory Commissions from the City Code pertaining to the Tree and Beautification Commission (on file in the City Clerk's office).

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Main Street Vero Beach Beautification Project – Tree Lights – Mrs. Elaine Jones

Mrs. Elaine Jones, Executive Director of Main Street Vero Beach, stated that they have a new project for seasonal lighting for the holidays. They have been in touch with Mr. Michael Naffziger, Theatrical Director at Vero Beach Charter High school, who is assisting them with adding uplighting in the trees along 14th Avenue, all around the Heritage Center, in front of Avanzare restaurant, and in the bushes. This will create a dramatic look to downtown and increase safety. They met with the Police Department about coordinating the timers for the lights, which they decided would go off at 2:00 a.m. Main Street Vero Beach also decided to do a LED commercial grade Christmas tree instead of renting one as they have done in the past. When they have the Downtown Friday tree lighting with the Mayor it will be beautiful. She explained that the uplighting for the trees come with remote controls that allow them to change the color and the motion of the lights. The Vero Beach Charter High School students are doing a school project which consists of designing and making Christmas lights to hang on all of the light poles in downtown.

Mr. Runge asked what is the timeline for this project.

Mrs. Jones explained that the lights will go up before Christmas and stay up during the season. The lights will be taken down in May for inspections and maintenance and then reinstalled again in October. The lights in the trees will be hung with aircraft cable, which is very strong and can hold up to 480 pounds. They have an insurance policy with the contractor that covers their labor and she has also contacted Main Street Vero Beach's insurance company to add lighting to their policy.

Mr. Runge asked who is funding the project.

Mrs. Jones replied that they hope to get grant money from the City again this year. Last year Main Street was given \$6,795 to be allocated to the Christmas tree project. Once they purchase the lights, equipment, and the tree it will belong to Main Street Vero Beach and the Collage will store all of it for them.

Mr. Runge said based on what he is hearing there is no request for the Tree and Beautification Commission to help with funding of this project.

Mrs. Jones replied for this year she thinks they will be okay with the funding. They upgraded the Christmas tree which cost them \$550 more, but they thought they would do a fundraiser if they needed to.

Mr. Downey asked to clarify if the students will be installing the lights.

Mrs. Jones replied no. The contractor they hired to put up the Christmas tree will be hanging the lights for the students.

Mrs. Leigh asked if she had a graphic of how the lighting will look. Mrs. Jones showed a similar picture of what the Christmas tree will look like, but she did not have one for the uplighting in the trees.

Mr. Runge said he assumes the lighting will be subtle and they will not see the point of light just the effects. Mrs. Jones replied yes. She explained that the lights will be up in the trees, 15 feet off the ground.

Ms. Schwarz asked if the lights are solar powered, or are they electrical. Mrs. Jones replied that they are all electrical.

Ms. Schwarz asked if they will be able to change the color and effects of the lights for different events and holidays. Mrs. Jones replied yes.

Ms. Schwarz asked where did they get the idea from, because she has seen this done in other cities.

Mrs. Jones said that Mrs. Suzy Feeney, Wings for Humanity, came up with the idea, so they talked about it and it went from there.

Mrs. Dussault asked why would the lights not be left up all year.

Mrs. Jones explained that the lights need to come down during hurricane season and to have them inspected for insurance purposes. Each year they will have them put up in October and taken down in May.

Mrs. Dussault asked if the insurance policy covers anything pertaining to damage to the trees.

Mrs. Jones replied that she is not sure, but she will check on that. She said she was informed that the way the lights are installed they would not damage the trees.

Mrs. Leigh stated that when she thinks of uplighting she pictures lights on the ground that would light up the tree trunks and the limbs. She asked if this is what they will be doing.

Mrs. Jones explained that instead of being on the ground they will be installed in the trees 15 feet above the ground.

Mr. Runge commented that the lights will only light the canopy of the tree and not the trunk.

Mrs. Leigh asked Mrs. Jones if she could provide the Tree and Beautification Commission with a layout design or map of what trees will be utilized. She said that she would also like to see an example of what the trees will look like with the lights.

Mr. Runge commented that it sounds like a worthwhile project. He invited Mrs. Jones to attend another Tree and Beautification Commission meeting to give them an update and to provide them with the information they asked for.

Mrs. Jones replied that she would love to do that.

Mr. Runge stated that the hanging baskets along Main Street need to be refurbished.

Mrs. Jones reported that they replanted the baskets recently for the fall, but the plants were small and they may not be very visible yet. Hopefully they will start to grow and fill in.

Mr. Runge asked who monitors the maintenance of the adopted pots in downtown.

Mrs. Jones explained that the Design Committee for Main Street Vero Beach does a monthly inspection of all the pots, hanging baskets, and the banners.

B) Old Dodgertown Golf Course Property

Mr. Runge explained that he was contacted by a City resident asking why the old Dodgertown Golf Course property was for sale and why could it not become a City Park or usable green space. He stated that he contacted Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, and he replied with an email stating that it was being sold to settle the debt on the property (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said he will contact this resident back with Mr. O'Connor's response.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mr. Runge reported that there is currently \$56,436.60 in the Tree Replacement Fund and \$1,602.06 in Tree Dedication Fund.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Ms. Schwarz commented that she would like this Commission to revisit Ms. Hayne's idea of doing some centennial work along 14th Avenue at the entrance to Crestlawn Cemetery.

Mr. Runge asked to have the 100th Anniversary celebration added to next month's agenda. He would also like to send out letters to the City Council members inviting them to attend the Tree and Beautification Commission meeting so they can keep this matter current.

Mrs. Dussault suggested that when they have established what schools will be involved in the 100th Anniversary celebration they should draft a letter asking to make another presentation to the City Council.

Mrs. Dussault stated that she has been compiling all kinds of information in respect to the various past City celebrations.

Mrs. Leigh asked if any individuals have been contacted from the last City celebration.

Mrs. Dussault replied that she has not contacted them yet.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – October 20, 2016

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for October 20, 2016.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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