

Tree and Beautification Commission 2015 Annual Report



2015 Arbor Day Tree Planting



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Jay Kramer, Mayor and
City Councilmembers

FROM: Mr. Karl Zimmermann, Chairman
Tree and Beautification Commission

DATE: December 17, 2015

SUBJECT: 2015 Tree and Beautification Commission Annual Report

The Tree and Beautification Commission held 10 regular Commission meetings and an Arbor Day Tree planting during 2015.

The Commission is currently working with five (5) regular members and we are currently seeking candidates to fill the two (2) alternate positions.

The City of Vero Beach was again certified as a "Tree City U.S.A. Town" for the 34th year, an impressive record, and achievement.

In January our Commission finalized the plans for advertising and promoting the City of Vero Beach Beautification Day, which was a new activity that took place the second weekend in February. We will continue to bring awareness to this annual event and encourage our citizens to participate. We hope this will be a tradition that will carry on for many years to come.

This year the City Resolution pertaining to the Tree and Beautification Commission was revised. It was brought to our attention that after the beautification aspect was added to the Tree Commission the Resolution was never amended to allow for use of the Tree Planting fees to include the funding of beautification projects and activities approved by the City Council. Our Commission reviewed and discussed the draft copy of the amended Resolution at our February meeting and it was approved by City Council in March.

Our Arbor Day activity this year consisted of planting a tree at Riverside Park near the walking/jogging trail on April 24, 2015. Students from Beachland Elementary School were invited to attend as well as City Council, members of the press, and the citizens of Vero Beach. The students helped shovel soil around the tree as their part of the Arbor Day event.

At a regular meeting, our Commission also discussed ways to raise awareness and get more people involved with Arbor Day. By moving the event to a weekend, dedicating a tree in honor or memory of a hero, a City official, an outstanding citizen, etc., would bring family and friends to the event and create a focus on Arbor Day.

The fourth grade tree seedling program that we sponsored in the past did not take place this year. After several attempts, we were unable to get confirmed dates to visit the schools before the end of the school year.

Our Commission also started discussing the City's Tree Protection Ordinance for improper pruning of trees in the City. Our current City Ordinance does not define a violation for improper pruning unless the tree dies. Some basic research was started on how other cities and municipalities handle this issue, but this discussion was moved down on the priority list in the Planning and Zoning Department due to their heavy workload. We hope to be able to look at this again in the near future and possibly find some working solutions on how to prevent improper tree trimming, pruning, and topping of the trees in the City.

In May our Commission was presented with a concept of doing a centennial tree-planting project by our member, Mr. Chris Runge. The goal would be to have this project completed in 2019 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the City of Vero Beach. Mr. Runge presented us with a draft outline highlighting the key aspects of the project, who would be involved and the timeline. We have continued to discuss at length possible locations that would accommodate this larger scale tree-planting project. We envision that it will be enjoyed by future generations and be known as the 100th Anniversary celebration project for the City.

At our regular meeting in December, Mrs. Debbie Avery and Mrs. Robin Pelensky, representatives from Main Street Vero Beach, gave us an update on the Downtown planters and hanging baskets. Mrs. Pelensky also presented us with a proposal from the Ocean Side Business Association (OBA) of adding planters along Ocean Drive in the City bulb outs. She explained that the OBA has already purchased the potting bowls and they are actively seeking proposals from contractors for planting and maintaining the pots. Our Commission requested that she attend our next meeting to review the plant selection options and the maintenance schedule.

There were six (6) trees dedicated this year utilizing the Dedicatory Tree Program. This year trees were designated for Riverside Park, Troy Moody Park, and MacWilliam Park even though dedicatory trees are located throughout the various City Parks.

Goals for 2016

- A. Continue with the Dedicatory Tree program and tree plantings.
- B. Review and monitor the *Baskets to Banners* and *Adopt a Pot* program in Downtown Vero Beach.
- C. Monitor the new planters and plants being installed along Ocean Drive to ensure their success.
- D. Continue with Arbor Day tree plantings to create awareness and to maintain the Tree City USA status.
- E. Continue to work with the schoolchildren at the City elementary schools to educate them about the importance of trees and to encourage tree plantings.
- F. Consider other approaches to encourage tree planting on private property in the City of Vero Beach.
- G. Hold the annual City of Vero Beach Beautification Weekend and continue to promote and increase participation for this event.
- G. Continue planning and preparing for the Centennial Tree Planting project.