

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, June 16, 2016 – 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A) May 19, 2016**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 4. OLD BUSINESS**
 - A) Review of Tree Proposed Locations and Proposed Phasing**
 - B) Fourth Grade Forestry Update**
 - C) Update on 20th Avenue Between 12th Street and 16th Street**
- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
- 6. TREASURY REPORT**
- 7. CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS**
 - A) Update from City Council on Centennial Tree Planting and Celebration**
- 8. MEMBER’S MATTERS**
 - A) Next Meeting Date – July 21, 2016**
- 9. ADJOURNMENT**

This is a Public Meeting. Should any interested party seek to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Anyone who needs a special accommodation for this meeting may contact the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at 978-4920 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, May 19, 2016 – 9:00 a.m.
Training Room, Second Floor, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, Chris Runge; Vice-Chairman, Daniel Downey (arrived at 9:02 a.m.); Members: Cynthia Schwarz, Marilyn Black Dussault, and Barbara Leigh **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) April 21, 2016

Mrs. Dussault made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2016 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Runge stated that he would like to modify the agenda and discuss the New Business items before Old Business. There were no objections from the Commission members.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of Arbor Day – April 29, 2016

Mr. Downey reported that they had a skeleton crew at the Arbor Day event, but they had a nice time. A class of fourth grade students attended from Rosewood Magnet School. He said that several of the students commented that they had been to an Arbor Day event at Leisure Square when they were in kindergarten and they pointed out the tree that they planted.

Mrs. Dussault agreed that several of the students recognized the tree they planted and they were so excited about that. She wondered if other students ever attended more than one (1) Arbor Day event.

Mr. Downey stated that they invite students from one (1) of the City's elementary schools if the planting location is close to the school, but the school selects the class that will attend.

Mr. Runge suggested that they contact Rosewood Magnet School to see if the fourth grade students who attended this year would be interested in writing a short essay about the two (2) Arbor Day events they attended. He will see about submitting the essays to the Arbor Day Foundation to use in one of their publications.

B) Update on Fourth Grade Forester Program

Mrs. Dussault read a report she prepared on the information she found on the Fourth Grade Foresters USA Program (attached). She asked if the Tree and Beautification Commission ever participated in the program as it is outlined.

Mr. Downey explained that Ms. Gayle Lafferty, Planner, introduced them to the Fourth Grade Forester program and they participated in it one (1) year. They received individually packaged Pine trees, but the seedlings were unhealthy and they were very disappointed with them. The following years they had Oak tree seedlings, pots, and soil donated to them by a local nursery.

Mrs. Dussault said that if they are not using or applying to the Fourth Grade Forester program then they are not bound to any of their requirements. She was thinking about putting together a program for the two (2) City elementary schools. The schools could grow trees that would be transplanted as part of the 100th anniversary as a gift to the City from the schools. The other Commission members agreed that was a wonderful idea.

Mr. Runge stated that they don't know where the Centennial tree planting will be yet, but maybe they could donate one (1) large 300-gallon container grown tree to each school. Throughout the school year the students would be responsible for taking care of the tree and in the summer it could be hooked into the schools irrigation system so it stays watered. He said that he can envision two (2) specimen trees with some type of hardscape or a wall between them as the Centennial tree project. The two trees from the schools could be transferred to the planting site for the anniversary celebration. This will create a buy in from the students, their parents, and the schools.

Ms. Schwarz asked if the High School and the Freshman Learning Center are in the City limits.

Mr. Downey replied yes.

Ms. Schwarz said then they should be included as well.

Mrs. Dussault agreed that all the children in the City schools should have a part in the Centennial celebration. They are our future so let's get them excited about this event. She already saw that excitement from the students at the Arbor Day tree planting. They were very proud of the other tree they planted several years earlier and how much it had grown. If this project is approved by the City Council she suggests that someone from the Tree and Beautification Commission visit each school and talk with the Principal to explain the vision and goal of the 100th Anniversary celebration.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Landscaping and Tree Protection Ordinance – Mr. Tim McGarry, Planning & Development Director

Mr. Tim McGarry, Planning and Development Director, handed out copies of a section of Chapter 72 of the City Code pertaining to tree protection and the permitting process as well as a summary he prepared on the tree removal permitting process and key components (on file in the City Clerk's office). He briefly went over his summary. He explained that the current City Code does not require the removal of invasive species, but he is moving to have that changed. Right now they encourage people to clean out the invasive species while they are removing trees.

Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, asked if he will use the state of Florida's list of invasive exotic plants. She explained that a lot of them on the list are typical ornamentals and are found in several of the City Parks.

Mr. McGarry replied that they will be very careful to only select the plants that can cause a lot of problems.

Mrs. Dussault asked if the Code is changed will any existing plants be grandfathered in.

Mr. McGarry said that sometimes they can be grandfathered in, or there is an amortization period of a set amount of years. He is putting this in the comprehensive plan now, so it will be a while before it is put into the Land Development Regulations. He continued by going through his summary and discussing tree removals and the permit application process.

Mrs. Dussault asked if people who purchase property try hard to design buildings around the trees.

Mr. McGarry said he finds that there are a lot of people who like trees and are sensitive to trying to work around them. However, there are some who don't care and just want to build their mega structure and there is not much they can do. He continued with his discussion on mitigation requirements. He explained that there is more flexibility in commercial lots because the setbacks are less and they have more buildable area.

Mrs. Leigh asked under item 4 of mitigation requirements do people need to choose one (1) of these options.

Mr. McGarry explained that they can choose one (1) or a combination of items. If they are required to do mitigation and they choose not to relocate or replace the trees then they will need to pay into the Tree Replacement Fund. He continued with discussing tree removal without a permit and other provisions.

Mr. Runge asked who is responsible for watching and reporting when trees are cut down.

Mr. McGarry commented that it is usually a neighbor who calls to check on or report that a tree is being cut down. City staff may also report things they see to Code Enforcement for them to investigate.

Mr. Runge asked what is the difference between protected trees and specimen trees.

Mr. McGarry replied that it has to do with the species of the tree and the size. A protected tree is any tree up to 3 inches DBH (diameter at breast height).

Mr. Runge explained that what brought this discussion to the table was the old Osceola school site. The Tree and Beautification Commission wanted a better understanding of the process.

Mr. McGarry reported that the new owners of that site will have to put in 95 trees in the front nine (9) acres. The back nine (9) acres are not part of the development. Right now it looks bad because it is in the development stage. It is going to be a 25,000 square foot Church and the parking will be up front, but it will look very nice once it is complete.

Mr. Runge asked in regards to mitigation, what would be required if an 80 year old tree with a 24 inch caliper was taken down.

Ms. Haynes stated that trees will need to be planted that equal the caliper of the tree that was removed. Several smaller trees will not have the same impact, but it will be the same caliper. Some people cannot do that on their property and that is why they pay into the mitigation fund.

Mr. McGarry explained that if trees are removed from the buildable area then the mitigation is less. He assured the Commission members that there will be a lot of trees on the Church property when it is done.

Ms. Schwarz asked what does double the mitigation requirements mean.

Mr. McGarry explained that if the normal mitigation fine is \$6,000 then it would be \$12,000 if the tree(s) was removed without a permit. The applicant will have a choice on what they want to do, but most likely they do not want to replant trees and they will pay the money into the mitigation fund.

Mrs. Dussault said that essentially there is some type of hefty penalty to discourage them from doing it again. Mr. McGarry replied yes.

The Commission members thanked Mr. McGarry for attending the meeting and answering their questions.

Mrs. Dussault stated that the information Mr. McGarry provided is very helpful. She said that there is a lot of exclusions and a lot of areas that are handled at the Director's discretion, which can give the perception of bribery of favoritism.

B) Tree Dedication Application – Mr. Mike Reed

Mr. Runge announced that they received an application for a tree dedication from Mr. Mike Reed. The request is to dedicate a tree located at Riverside Park.

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to accept the tree dedication application. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mr. Runge reported that there is \$47,993.91 in the Tree Removal/Replacement fund and \$1,002.06 in the Tree Dedication fund.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Runge said at their last meeting they discussed planting trees along 14th Avenue between 17th Place and 16th Street. He asked if anyone had the opportunity to look at the area.

Mrs. Dussault report that she did drive by. She said there is also another section along 14th Avenue between the area he suggested and where there are trees planted already.

Mr. Runge explained that the reason he chose this area is because there are no sidewalks and it is wide open.

Ms. Haynes stated that she will not proceed with tasking the people to look for utilities until she has the complete list of recommended planting areas from the Tree and Beautification Commission.

The Commission members and Ms. Haynes discussed the possibility of including a year of maintenance by the contractor that is hired to plant the trees. This would take the burden off the City staff and it could be paid for from the Tree Replacement fund.

Ms. Haynes explained that when they plant trees on City right-of-ways in front of someone's home or business it impacts the property owners. The City only maintains the part of the tree that overhangs the road or sidewalk. The home or business owner will be responsible for trimming the part of the tree that overhangs on their property. She suggested that the Tree Commission come up with a plan and then engage the property owners about planting trees. The reason there are no trees in certain areas is that there are usually underground utilities running through there.

The Committee members and Ms. Haynes discussed several properties as possible areas for tree plantings.

Ms. Haynes encouraged them to come up with a location for the Centennial celebration.

Mr. Runge explained that he submitted a letter to the City Council tasking them to form a Centennial Anniversary Committee for the purpose of choosing a location and working out the details.

Mrs. Dussault stated that the Tree and Beautification Commission can certainly recommend a location that they would see appropriate, but for the City Council to embrace it would be better.

Ms. Schwarz asked if the Commission has ever taken a stand on replanting the Palm Trees along Royal Palm Boulevard.

Mr. Downey stated that the Tree and Beautification Commission has always taken the stance that a Palm is not a tree.

Ms. Haynes explained that when those Palm Trees were planted along Royal Palm Boulevard the area was not developed yet. Now it is private property and there are sidewalks.

Mr. Runge charged all of the Commission members to take different colored pens and mark their maps with their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd priority areas for trees to be planted. At their next meeting they will take everyone's first priorities and code them onto one (1) map. That might give them seven (7) locations with three (3) trees each for a total of 21 trees. This would be funded from the Tree Replacement account.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dussault said that other City departments have interns that work with them, so why can't the Tree Commission have interns. She was thinking high school students who need credit for volunteering.

Ms. Schwarz said that she mentioned that a while back, but she was thinking more along the lines of a liaison between the Tree and Beautification Commission and the schools.

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to delve into the possibility of getting an intern or liaison between the High School and the Tree and Beautification Commission. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion.

Mrs. Dussault said that there needs to be some research done to make sure if it is possible or permissible and how this will work before they present it to the City Council.

Mr. Runge said that once the individual completes the internship he would like to see them automatically assigned as an alternate member on the Tree and Beautification Commission.

Mrs. Dussault commented that she does not think that will happen. She suggested that once the internship is complete and the individual decides her or she is interested in joining the Tree and Beautification Commission then they should be considered for a position as an alternate member.

Ms. Schwarz said that her idea was more about tree education. She thought that a High School student could be a liaison and take the information they learn from the Tree and Beautification Commission back to the elementary schools. She feels that the older students may have a better rapport with the younger students.

Mrs. Dussault stated that Ms. Schwarz motion should include the appropriate research and investigation for her concept of a liaison and the Commission's idea of an intern.

Mrs. Dussault modified the motion to state that they look into the possibility of getting an intern or liaison between the High School and the Tree and Beautification Commission by including the necessary research with respect to an internship program and/or the concept of a liaison. Mrs. Leigh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

A) Next Meeting Date – June 21, 2016

Mr. Runge asked for an excused absence from the June meeting.

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for June 21, 2016.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:23 a.m. Mrs. Leigh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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**Report to The Tree & Beautification Commission of the City Of Vero Beach on
Fourth Grade Foresters USA Program (Program) May 19, 2016**

BACKGROUND:

The Program began in 2006 and is operated out of Lincoln, NE by its co-founder and managing partner Debra Ersch.

The stated goals of the Program are:

1. Observation of Arbor Day per each state's established date.
2. Send every 4th grader home with a tree.
3. Support employment for workers with disabilities who package each tree for distribution.
4. Bring schools and sponsors together.

According to their website, which includes an Educational Materials Page, businesses, individuals, organizations, even schools themselves may sponsor a school by notifying the Program, executing an agreement and paying to the Program \$1.78 per tree per pupil prior to shipping of trees.

The trees are 12 - 18 inches, individually packaged and heat sealed in a clear plastic bag, with roots dipped to keep them moist. They fit into a backpack and come with complete planting instructions including a box in which to plant them. The trees should be placed upright in the box upon receipt and kept in a cool, dark location, avoiding extreme heat and cold, until distributed to the students.

Each student is required to plant the tree and care for it, preferably at her/his own home. If no place at home is available, the Program recommends taking the tree to a relative's house with the same caveats. If that option is not available, "...the trees can be planted in a simple plastic dish with holes poked in the bottom for drainage." Where they should be planted is not specified.

Trees are shipped to the sponsor/school a week before that state's Arbor Day. Florida's Arbor Day for 2016 was January 15th. The Deadline date to participate was December 7, 2015.

Trees available are Afghan or Austrian or Loblolly or Ponderosa or Shore pines; Norway Spruce; and the Sabal Palm. The Sabal Palm appears to be the tree of choice for Florida because of its salt, drought, standing water and brackish water tolerance.

According to their website 77,925 4th grade students have participated in the program in Florida since 2007.

DISCUSSION:

I sent an e-mail to Ms. Ersch requesting general information with respect to the Florida participants in the Program and asked specifically about 4th graders in the City of Vero Beach, FL. Thus far Ms. Ersch has not replied.

My original assignment was to ascertain whether or not the Commission could deviate from the Program. However, my research has caused me to question whether the Commission has ever properly participated in the Program. Since I have been a member of this Commission I do not recall ever sending the Program \$1.78 per tree per person, nor do I recall receiving trees packaged and distributed by persons with disabilities.

Therefore, our initial discussion is whether we are or have ever been participants of this Program?

Next, if we have not participated in this Program as established, then we are not bound by its requirements.

If we have participated, then, predicated upon the alternatives offered within the Program, it would appear that planting the trees somewhere other than the respective student's home or the home of a relative, is permitted.

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1. Research to determine our prior participation in this Program and any deviation available from it with our Commission history and the information which should be available from the Program.**
- 2. Consider creating our own foresters program with the immediate goal of the students growing trees for the 100th Anniversary of the City of Vero Beach and transplanting them in 2019 as a gift to the City from the students, our future citizens and, hopefully, Tree & Beautification Commission members.**

**Respectfully submitted:
Marilyn Black Dussault
Commission Member**