

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, January 18, 2018– 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, Chris Runge; Vice Chairman, Marilyn Black Dussault; Members: Daniel Downey (arrived 9:04 a.m.), Cynthia Schwarz, Barbara Leigh, and Alternate Member #1, Elly Manov, **Also Present:** Assistant City Attorney, Stefanie Beskovoyne, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused absence: Mark Rodolico

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) December 21, 2017

Ms. Schwarz said that on the December 21, 2017 minutes under the Election of Officers, she did not nominate Mr. Runge for Chairman. She is not sure who did, but she knows it was not her. She nominated Mrs. Dussault for Vice Chairman.

Ms. Rita Hawkins, Senior Administrative Assistant, replied that she would review the DVD of the meeting and make the correction to the minutes if necessary.

Ms. Leigh made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2017 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting with the one (1) correction if it is needed. Mrs. Dussault seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments by the public.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Oceanside Business Association Update on Dish Planters – Mrs. Georgia Irish

Mr. Runge reported that he noticed the clay dish gardens along Ocean Drive were null and in need of attention, so he invited a member of the Oceanside Business Association (OBA) to today's meeting to provide them with an update.

Mrs. Georgia Irish, Oceanside Business Association, explained that the pots on the beach have not been up to par in comparison to how pretty the downtown area looks. She understands that the baskets and pots downtown are maintained by business owners. The mind frame of the retailers along Ocean Drive is that they would like the OBA to take care of the planters. The

OBA purchased the pots through membership fees and funds they raised. They asked the City to water them, and they hired Digg Gardens to plant them. Somewhere along the line the ball was dropped and the hired business did not continue to take care of the plants. She explained that

Mrs. Barbara Leigh, Tree and Beautification Commission member, has a business on the beachside and she was able to contact the landscape business to ask if they would come back and take care of the plants. She would like to ask the Tree and Beautification Commission if they could keep an eye on the beautification along Ocean Drive for them. She said they appreciated the City installing the drip lines to water the plants.

Mrs. Leigh explained that she used to be a member of the OBA, but resigned when she joined the Tree and Beautification Commission. When she was with the OBA she was in charge of the beautification and she worked with Mrs. Robin Pelensky, Main Street Vero Beach, and Mr. Spencer Porteous, Digg Gardens. When she left the OBA the ball was not picked by the next person in charge and Digg Gardens was not contacted about planting and maintaining the planters. She contacted Digg Gardens this week when it was brought to her attention. She would like to check with Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, to verify that the irrigation system in the bulb-outs is still operating, because drip lines come off the main irrigation system to water the planters. Mr. Porteous agreed to replant and maintain the plants again for the OBA, which worked out well before. They will probably follow the same guidelines as Main Street and not plant anything during the hot summer months.

Mr. Runge commented that he will send Ms. Haynes an email to ask her about the status of the irrigation system.

Mrs. Irish asked if they could work together on other beautification projects along Ocean Drive. She said a few of the retailers asked if some of the old sidewalks could be widened and they also asked about adding some nice benches in different areas. Mr. Downey replied that they have done dedicatory benches in the past. Mr. Runge suggested that Mrs. Irish speak with the City Manager regarding the widening of the sidewalks.

Mrs. Dussault clarified that the City does not supply free benches. The dedicatory benches are requested and purchased by people in memory of someone and they usually request the location of where they would like the bench to be placed.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Annual Report

Mr. Runge asked if there were any requested changes to the annual report.

Mrs. Leigh said that on page three (3) in the next to last paragraph it states *As of November the Tree Replacement/Mitigation Fund had a balance of*. She asked if they should update that to read *December*.

Ms. Hawkins replied that the account balances have not changed since the report was completed and she will update it to read *December*.

Mrs. Leigh made a motion to change the word *November* to *December* on page three (3) of the Tree and Beautification Commission Annual Report so it reads *As of December the Tree Replacement/Mitigation Fund has a balance of*. Mr. Downey seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Update on the 100th Anniversary

Mrs. Dussault reported that she has a meeting scheduled for next Thursday with Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, and Mr. Tony Young, City Council Member, to discuss the art and essay contests with the schools. On February 7, 2018 the entire Centennial Committee is meeting at Dodgertown for a group photo and the revelation of the timeline that Mrs. Pam Cooper, Historian, put together. They will need help with planting the trees at the schools, but at this point she is not sure how many schools will be participating. She would also like to see a commemorative plaque for each tree, so they might need people to help with those as well. She will speak with the Centennial Committee to find out how they go about soliciting for that help. Everything is pulling together nicely. The timeline that Mrs. Cooper put together is the timeline of the development of the City and it will be part of the basis when going before the school Principals and the students. It will provide the students with a wide variety of ideas they can write an essay on, or for designing a poster.

C) Beautification Weekend Banner Final Proof

The Commission members all agreed they liked the final proof of the Beautification Weekend banner.

Mrs. Dussault made a motion to accept the final proof of the Beautification Weekend banner. Mrs. Leigh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Schwarz stated that the banner only takes three (3) or four (4) days to be made.

Mr. Runge suggested that the Commission members speak with their neighbors and encourage them to participate, because that is how the word spreads.

Ms. Schwarz commented that they really need to post this information on the City's facebook page, because people really respond to that. She does not mind writing something or taking some pictures.

Mr. Runge suggested that they take the banner proof and the press release, which have already been approved and use that as the posting on the facebook page. Mrs. Leigh suggested that even a generic photo of people or families working in their yards would work.

Ms. Schwarz asked what is their avenue for using the City's facebook page to post information about the Tree and Beautification Commission. Ms. Hawkins replied that she can submit their information to Mrs. Bursick for her review and she will have it put on the facebook page if it is approved.

Ms. Schwarz commented that going forward she believes that the Tree and Beautification Commission should have their own facebook page if other Commissions and Boards have their own.

Ms. Stephanie Beskovoyne, Assistant City Attorney, stated that the City does not have a policy in place for facebook.

Mr. Runge asked to have facebook added to their February agenda for further discussion. He does not think that many people in the City of Vero Beach even know that the Tree and Beautification Commission exists, or what they do. The more they can disseminate what they do to maintain the City's Tree City USA status the better.

Mrs. Leigh stated that she is a member of the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce. She asked if they could have the Beautification Weekend information posted on their website. Mr. Runge replied that they have an official press release notice that she could use if they will post it.

Mrs. Dussault agrees that facebook is something that needs to be discussed in depth by their Commission. She said she watched a January City Council meeting and she was saddened that a City Councilmember said he was not very enthusiastic about the annual reports, or having any of the Commission or Board members appear before them with presentations. She was very upset by that statement, because each of them could be doing many other things with their time. She believes that the Commission and Board members are dedicated, so she thinks it is time they make themselves more visible in the proper manner.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mr. Runge reported that there have been no changes to the Tree Accounts since their last meeting.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Runge said that he would like to challenge each of the Tree and Beautification Commission members to come up their own special project that they feel would add to the culture of the City of Vero Beach. It needs to be within the scope of what the Commission can achieve, but it would be something for them to be proud of and take ownership in.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Ms. Schwarz said she understands that they need to plant trees in the City, but she believes they need to reach out to the County and encourage their involvement. The other day she spoke with a person who just came back from Israel and she thought that area would be a desert. However, they explained that Israel is actually very green and flourishing, because they plant a lot of trees. She suggested that they contact Israel because they are known worldwide for their dedicatory tree program. Maybe they can expand more globally. She explained that she also tried to find a 100th Anniversary sister City, but when she spoke with other cities that were turning 100 she was told they had no plans for any type of celebration. She would like to push for a facebook page, because it is easier to keep in contact with people and it will give the Commission more exposure.

Ms. Beskovoyne stated that the Legal Department has heard the concerns about social media and facebook not only from this Commission, but also from numerous areas and they are working on a policy to address their questions and to provide them with guidance.

Mrs. Dussault said she believes that the Centennial Committee's time line of what is happening monthly should be on the City website. There seems to be a wealth of information available, but the public knows nothing about it. There are hundreds of people involved in the centennial planning, but the public is not being informed. She asked Ms. Beskovoyne to check to see if there are legal reasons why the centennial planning information is not posted on the City website. She wants the people in Vero Beach to be as enthusiastic about the celebration as the Centennial Committee.

Ms. Schwarz said there is a facebook page called Growing Up in Vero Beach, which is about the old families like the Graves and Sextons. She will review their page, because she is curious if they have anything about the Centennial Celebration on their site.

Mrs. Dussault explained that the weekend following the tree plantings at the schools, there will be a football game at the Vero Beach High School. All of the old graduates from the Vero Beach High school will be invited and honored at the game. She thinks that the community would like to know about that.

Mrs. Leigh said it sounds like the Centennial Committee needs their own facebook page.

Ms. Beskovoyne said that if a City employee is on another Board or Commission outside of the City she does not see any issues since they are not using the City logo or City funds.

Mrs. Dussault said that the Tree and Beautification Commission has been discussing the Centennial Celebration for over a year. The City will be hitting their 100th Anniversary and she wants it to be a fantastic yearlong celebration. This City was founded by 792 people 100 years ago and look at where Vero Beach is today. She would like to see more publicity on this.

Ms. Schwarz asked how do other cities and towns who have celebrated big anniversaries get the word out to the public.

Mrs. Dussault said she has been involved with big anniversary celebrations long before facebook and social media. Everything was done by the press, radio, television, and reporters getting the word out. They visited the Chamber of Commerce, churches, organizations, social groups, etc. Her opinion is that someone from the Centennial Committee should be going before the City Council every month to discuss the progress of the celebration.

Mrs. Leigh agreed that it is about getting more advertising. Whoever goes before the City Council needs to be more of a motivational speaker to get them excited about the celebration.

Ms. Schwarz asked since the schools will be planting the trees what about tapping into them, because there are thousands of people involved with the schools.

Mrs. Dussault explained that she and Mr. Young met with Dr. Mark Rendell, Superintendent of Indian River County School District, in August. He asked them to hold off until March to present the tree-planting event to the school principals. If they present it too early the information and ideas may get lost. They want to involve the students as much as possible, because that will also bring in the parents, grandparents, etc.

Ms. Manov said that she is very excited about the celebration and every month she goes to different clubs and groups and gives them a political report on what is happening in the City. She explained that she was recently in the Elections Office and discovered they have all of the voting ledgers going all the way back to 1919. Mrs. Dussault said she will bring that information to the attention of the Centennial Committee.

Ms. Manov suggested that the City Council contact the State Senate to ask if they would give the City a plaque recognizing their Centennial Anniversary. That would be great recognition for the City. When she talks with groups most people don't even know about the Centennial Committee, or that the City is turning 100 years old.

Mrs. Dussault asked Ms. Beskovoyne if the request for a day of recognition, or a Proclamation on the creation of Vero Beach would have to come from the City Council.

Ms. Beskovoyne said she thinks they are talking about the Centennial Committee right now and not the Tree and Beautification Commission. The Centennial Committee is outside of the scope of what she can provide them legal advice on.

Mrs. Dussault asked if they received any information back on when the trees will be planted for the Cultural Arts Village. Mr. Runge replied that a representative came to a Tree and Beautification Commission meeting and explained that the trees would be planted as part of the Centennial. He believes that an approximate date is in the minutes from that meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – February 15, 2018

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for February 15, 2018.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Dussault made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 9:56 a.m. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Leigh and it passed unanimously.

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