

VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, February 20, 2020 – 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Chairman, Marilyn Black Dussault; Vice Chairman, Cynthia Schwarz; Members: Fran Robinson, Neal Roe, and Katherine Booth **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner, Grounds Maintenance Manager, Nanette Haynes, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dussault 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 16, 2020

Mrs. Dussault asked to make one (1) correction to the January 16, 2020 minutes. In reviewing who was present at the meeting, Mr. Roe was not present and he should be listed as an excused absence.

Mrs. Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2020 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting with the one (1) correction. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

None

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of the Beautification Weekend and Proclamation

Mrs. Dussault announced that she, Mrs. Robinson, and Mrs. Booth attended the February 18th City Council meeting for the reading of the Beautification Weekend Proclamation, which was very nice. Mrs. Robinson could not stay, so she and Mrs. Booth accepted the Proclamation, which she provided a picture of (on file in the City Clerk's office).

B) Discuss Inviting Indian River County to Join in the Beautification Weekend

Mrs. Dussault stated that at their last meeting there was a consensus about wanting to invite Indian River County to join them in the Beautification Weekend next year. They will have to get approval from the City Council to invite them.

Ms. Schwarz asked if they discussed this originally when they started this several years ago. Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, replied no. She said there was nothing formally discussed about inviting the County.

Mrs. Dussault said that they might want to combine this topic with item 5-C) *2021 Beautification Weekend Events with Outside Organizations*. They can combine the discussions and plans so they can make a motion to present to the City Council. She would like to be able to discuss the entire program with the City Council rather than just ask permission to invite Indian River County.

Mr. Roe stated that he submitted his proposal and ideas in December, but he did not mention Indian River County.

Mrs. Dussault agreed that Indian River County was not included, so that is why they need to start planning now for the 2021 Beautification Weekend. She said they have to be clear on what they are doing and how they want to expand this program. She stated that Mr. Roe proposed bringing in Landscaping companies, and other community activities involving the Master Gardeners and the Garden Club. She would also like feedback from Ms. Haynes on a project that she could do for the City. She would like a project that is big and visible to show the community what the Tree and Beautification Commission does for the City. Vero Beach is growing and many people do not have a clue about what the various Commissions do.

Ms. Haynes said that her problem is usually the timing of having a project done close to that weekend. She explained that her Beautification Weekend project for this year is now finished. She created a bird and butterfly garden at Leisure square. She has a project in mind that would be very visible at the Cemetery, but it does not involve trees and they could keep this in mind for a Beautification Weekend project. She will bring a couple of ideas to the March meeting to discuss with the Commission. It might be completed early, but as long as they have publicity indicating it is a Beautification Weekend project that should be fine.

Ms. Schwarz asked if they could keep involving the schools in the City like they did with the Centennial trees. She knows that there are only a couple of schools, but they might want more trees.

Mrs. Dussault replied yes, there is a way of involving more of the schools and the children in the County, but it will involve going to the City Council and the School Board. She knows that Mrs. Robinson is very involved with the programs as Vero Beach Elementary.

Mrs. Robinson replied that it is hard work, but it is fun working with the children. They are learning things they have never had the opportunity to learn about and eating foods they have never been introduced to before.

Mrs. Dussault stated that she would like to see the Mayor's Award reinstated. She thought that perhaps they could encourage landscape companies to offering specials during the beautification week or weekend. There are people who cannot take care of their property the way they want to or they cannot afford it, so offering specials prices or volunteers to do some work would help. She said they will discuss this more at their next meeting.

C) 2021 Beautification Weekend Events with Outside Organizations – Mr. Neal Roe

Please note this item was discussed with item 5-B).

D) Discuss Publication of News Articles from Mrs. Katherine Booth

Mrs. Dussault reported that she looked up and found four (4) publications pertaining to pruning and tree care that Mrs. Booth might look into for publishing her article (on file in the City Clerk's office). She thought these publications as well as the Arbor Day Foundation clearly deal with the subject of her article. She might want to approach some of them to see if they show any interest. If they are interested then they can go before the City Council to ask permission for it to be published.

Mrs. Booth thanked Mrs. Dussault.

Ms. Schwarz asked Mrs. Booth if her objective is to get the Tree and Beautification Commission tagged on it because she thinks that the article will be better received.

Mrs. Booth replied not necessarily. She just thought that she would have the support of the Tree and Beautification Commission to get the information out to the community.

Ms. Schwarz told Mrs. Booth that her article does not necessarily need to be supported by the Commission. With all the research she did, the article would stand on its own and speak for itself. If she does not have the Commissions backing, it might make it easier for her to get it published.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mrs. Dussault reported that the Tree Replacement/Mitigation Fund has a balance of \$100,158.40 and the Tree Planting Application Fund has a balance of \$1,069.21. She asked the Commission members to think about projects.

Ms. Schwarz stated that they talked about planting trees in the triangle island near the Theatre Guild.

Ms. Haynes replied that she has not heard back from the Water and Sewer Department on the hookup costs yet.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dussault stated that she was thinking about doing their Arbor Day celebration this year on a Saturday instead of a weekday, but she does not know if that is possible.

Ms. Haynes stated that would be problematic since her crews do not work on Saturday.

Ms. Schwarz said that they will not be able to invite the school children.

Mrs. Dussault replied that is why she wanted to do it on a Saturday, so they could publicly invite anyone. They only have two (2) schools in the City limits and they have to plant a tree where the children can walk to.

Ms. Haynes stated that there will come a time that she will not have any more room at Leisure Square and MacWilliam Park to plant trees.

Ms. Schwarz asked Ms. Haynes where would she plant a tree this year even if it did not involve the schools.

Ms. Haynes replied that she would need to think about it. She is out of space at Riverside Park, but there might be room for one (1) more tree at both MacWilliam Park and Troy Moody Park. She explained that she cannot plant trees everywhere, because Parks need open space for activities.

Ms. Schwarz said that in McAnsh Park when all the trees were planted along Victory Boulevard, she remembers that the section of Buena Vista Boulevard from Victory Boulevard to the Theatre Guild was lined with Orchid Trees. She was told that the former leaders of the City wanted to make Vero Beach known as the Orchid City. She thought that as a Commission they could continue planting Live Oak trees or another type of tree along Buena Vista Boulevard to the Theater Guild.

Ms. Haynes explained that planting trees along the right-of-way is a Public Works decision. The problem is that the utility lines are located there and if they have to dig, the tree will lose that conflict. This would also put a burden on her crews, because they would have to water the trees.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Ms. Schwarz said that Davey Tree Service took out a Palm Tree on the right-of-way on Royal Palm Boulevard behind the 23rd Street 7-11 store. She asked if the City plans to replant another tree there.

Ms. Haynes said that was a dead Washingtonian Palm. She said when there is a building on the property the right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner.

Ms. Schwarz and the Commission members spoke about how insurance companies are telling people that they have to remove trees that are close to their homes or they will not continue to cover them.

Mr. Roe said that older homes are under different scrutiny.

Mrs. Robinson asked Ms. Haynes what her plans are for removing the pots from downtown.

Ms. Haynes replied that they will be redoing the bulb outs in downtown to include all native, Florida friendly plants. She wants to remove the pots, because they take up a lot of room, they are not well kept, and they do not go with the new design.

Mrs. Robinson asked what about the hanging baskets.

Ms. Haynes stated that they are fine and Main Street is committed to keeping the hanging baskets refreshed every quarter.

Ms. Haynes and the Commission discussed trimming Palm Trees.

Mr. Roe asked what is the time frame for getting all the information together for the Beautification Weekend so they can present it to the City Council.

Mrs. Dussault asked the Commission members to submit their ideas to Ms. Rita Hawkins, Senior Administrative Assistant, in the City Clerk's office, so she can include them with the next agenda packet. At the March meeting, they should be able to make a motion on the information, so she can take it to the City Council in April.

Ms. Haynes asked if they will need her information pertaining to a City project by March.

Mrs. Dussault replied no, because they do not need to get permission from the City Council on her project.

Mrs. Dussault asked Mr. Turner if there would be any problem with them approaching businesses, even in the County, such as landscaping or home improvement companies if they could promote special offers to customers for the Beautification Weekend.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said as long as they are not paying them for any services that would be fine.

Mrs. Booth thanked Mrs. Dussault for the references for possible publications. She said when she is talking about tree pruning she is only speaking to the pruning of Live Oaks and Laurel Oaks.

Mrs. Booth said that she understands that the only certifying body for Arborist is the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). She explained that they have different levels of certification, but there is no standardized training for arboriculture in the State of Florida.

The Commission continued discussing the certification and lack of licensing for Arborists.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – March 19, 2020

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for March 19, 2020.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:04 a.m. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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