

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MINUTES
March 21, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice 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 17, 2019

Mrs. Robinson asked to have her unexcused absence changed to excused as she verbally mentioned it at the December meeting.

Mr. Roe made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2019 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting with the one (1) correction made. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A) Chairman

Mrs. Dussault stated that they need to hold their Election of Officers, which is a little later than normal due to the City Council Special Election. She asked for nominations for Chairman.

Ms. Schwarz nominated Mrs. Marilyn Black Dussault for Chairman. Mr. Roe second the nomination. There were no other nominations. Mrs. Dussault was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Tree and Beautification Commission.

B) Vice-Chairman

Mrs. Dussault nominated Ms. Cynthia Schwarz for Vice Chairman. Mrs. Robinson seconded the nomination. With no other nominations, Ms. Schwarz was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman of the Tree and Beautification Commission.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Richard Baker, President of the Pelican Island Audubon Society, said that he had a couple of handouts for the Commission members (on file in the City Clerk's office). He reported that they just planted their first six (6) trees as part of their Trees for Life project. Their long-term goal is

to plant 100,000 trees in Indian River County over the next 10 to 15 years. Another big goal is to plant 5,000 trees in the next two (2) years. The first six (6) trees were planted in Gifford in collaboration with the Environmental Learning Center at an affordable housing development. They believe by planting trees it will help with global warming and help clean up the Indian River Lagoon. They are working with 22 organizations, including the Indian River County Health Department, the University of Florida Extension, the Lions Club of Sebastian, and many others. The Indian River Land Trust provided them 100 Live Oak Trees and they are now ready to be planted. Anyone who would like a tree should contact the Pelican Island Audubon Society. The people receiving the trees will be required to take a one (1) hour course to be taught the value of the tree, how to plant it, and how to take care of it. They will GPS track each tree that is planted, so they can have volunteers check on them to make sure they are being taken care of. The Audubon Society is off to a good start, because people have given them a lot of acorns. They have almost 1,500 Live Oak Trees planted in one (1) gallon pots and by the fall they should be ready to plant. In their greenhouse they have approximately 4,500 acorns germinating in trays and they will eventually be in one (1) gallon pots too. The Audubon Society raised about \$75,000 from contributions towards this project. They will also be introducing fruit trees especially to Gifford, Wabasso, and Fellsmere. They are not native trees, but one (1) tree can probably produce enough fruit for three (3) households. They will spend about \$15,000 to buy and plant the fruit trees.

Mrs. Dussault stated that she loves the idea of the acorn nursery. She announced that the County will be turning 100 years old in 2025, so maybe they could have 2,025 trees planted by then as part of that celebration.

Dr. Baker announced that they will be getting a second greenhouse. The Indian River Lagoon Council is giving them \$5,000 towards the cost of it. Their first greenhouse was provided by the National Audubon Society. They will initially use them for trees, but they will eventually be growing native plants and selling them. Right now people have to go to Brevard or St. Lucie Counties to find native plant nurseries. The Audubon Society wants to provide trees and plants that produce insects for the birds.

Ms. Schwarz thanked Dr. Baker for providing her with the Live Oak Trees she gave away at the Library program.

Mrs. Robinson asked what kind of fruit trees are they thinking about planting. Dr. Baker replied that they will be non-citrus, but probably a variety of mangos and other fruit trees. He explained that the Environmental Learning Center will be helping the Audubon Society. They will be going into the schools to educate the children on the value of trees. They plan on giving each school a tree and getting one (1) student to volunteer to take care of the tree during the school year and then that student can take that tree home to plant.

Mrs. Booth asked if these new trees will need irrigation and if so, for how long. Dr. Baker replied yes, they will need irrigation. Depending on the soil they will probably need to be watered every other day for at least the first month. After that they will need to be watered once a week for a year.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Dedicatory Tree Application – Wesley Gensel

Mrs. Dussault stated that they received two (2) dedicatory tree applications to review for approval. The first one (1) is from Wesley Gensel and he selected a tree in MacWilliam Park to dedicate to Richard Hartney Gensel.

Mrs. Robinson made a motion to accept the dedicatory tree application from Wesley Gensel. Mr. Roe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Dedicatory Tree Application – Shannon Mazzie

Mrs. Dussault stated that the second dedicatory tree application is from Shannon Mazzie and the dedicatory tree is in Riverside Park.

Mrs. Robinson made a motion to accept the application from Shannon Mazzie. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Booth asked if there is enough room at Riverside Park for these trees. Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, stated that they are dedicating existing trees, because there is no room for new trees in Riverside Park.

Mrs. Dussault explained to Mrs. Booth that when they receive these applications and they have been initialed by the appropriate parties they can be assured that all the prior work has been done.

Mr. Roe asked if the dedicatory trees create revenue. Ms. Haynes explained that they charge the same price for a new tree as they do for an existing tree. There is a \$100 application fee that goes into the Tree and Beautification account. The cost for the tree is at market price and right now that is \$650. The plaque costs right around \$175, so the applicant spends a little less than \$1,000 for a dedicatory tree.

Ms. Schwarz asked Ms. Haynes if she offers existing trees more often than planting a new one.

Ms. Haynes replied that she did not use to offer existing trees as much, but so many people want a dedicatory tree at Riverside Park and there is no room for new trees there. They started offering the existing trees several years ago and people love the large mature trees. It is just a matter of having the plaque made and installed when they dedicate an existing tree. Offering the existing trees also keeps the program going instead of saying that the Park is full.

Mrs. Booth asked if the dedicatory trees are in a certain area in Riverside Park and do the people get to choose what tree the plaque goes on. Mrs. Haynes replied that she meets with the applicants and they pick out a tree, which are located all over the Park.

C) Arbor Day - April 26, 2019 - Proclamation and Arbor Day Tree Planting

Mrs. Dussault stated that Arbor Day is on Friday, April 26, 2019. She asked if they know where they will be planting a tree. Ms. Haynes said that they planted a tree at Leisure Square last year, so they will probably be back over at MacWilliam Park.

Mrs. Dussault asked if there is any where else they could plant a tree. Ms. Haynes replied that they want to have it within walking distance of Beachland Elementary School, because they like to involve the children. She will look for a spot at MacWilliam Park, but eventually they will run out of room there and at Leisure Square. Mr. Roe said that they might need to look at their policy to see if there are other areas to plant trees. Ms. Haynes stated that the policy will not change with them being able to use City funds to plant on non-City property. Mrs. Dussault said they might have to revise their program regarding the children attending. Ms. Haynes stated that there are other areas where they can plant trees, but they are not close to schools within the City. Mrs. Dussault said they could have an Arbor Day tree planting and another Arbor Day program for the children at their school.

Mr. Roe asked what is their participation on Arbor Day. Mrs. Dussault explained that they all attend the Arbor Day tree planting, but they are very careful about the Sunshine Law. They usually have a speaker and Ms. Haynes makes arrangements for the tree to be partially planted and the children help shovel the soil in around the tree. They will discuss the time for the tree planting at their next meeting. The school usually choses what time works best for the children who will be attending, but normally it is around 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Discussion of the Arbor Day Foundation - Community Canopy Program Information and Agreement

Ms. Schwarz stated that she does not have any new information on the Community Canopy Program other than discussing the paperwork they already have. Some of the big items they will want to discuss is how to educate the public on this project, setting up the GIS tracking and boundaries for the City limits, selecting what trees to offer, how involved they want to get with the Arbor Day Foundation, or if they want to do it more on their own.

Mrs. Dussault thanked Ms. Schwarz for doing a wonderful job of getting the information. She asked to have the agreement and the detail information emailed to the Commission members again, so they can review it and discuss it further at their next meeting. The Senior Administrative Assistant replied that she will send it to them again.

Mrs. Dussault asked the Commission members to take another look at the agreement and what is involved, so they can decide if or how they want to participate in the program. She believes this is a great idea.

Ms. Schwarz stated that she likes that the Arbor Day Foundation can ship the trees to the participants, but they also allow the organization (Tree and Beautification Commission) to hold their own event to hand out the trees.

Mrs. Booth asked if this is something they could combine with the Audubon Society. Mrs. Dussault explained that it could to some extent, but this is a City Tree Commission. The Commission is limited in terms of what they can spend money on and they cannot spend money on trees or projects outside of the City limits.

Mr. Roe said the Audubon Society and the Tree Commission are both looking for data, participation, and results. There might be a way to maneuver around it and work together. Mrs. Dussault said as long as everything they are doing with the trees remain in the City limits. They would love to work with them, but with their limitations it would be hard.

Ms. Schwarz explained that with the Arbor Day Foundation program there is no data tracking of the trees by the City. On the Arbor Day Foundation Community Canopy program website, the people put in their address and it determines if they are in the City limits and it looks at the property to determine the best place to plant a tree.

Dr. Baker stated that he does not see a problem working with the City and accurately keeping the City funds for only trees in the City limits. Mrs. Dussault stated that their first step would be to get permission from the City Council to give money to his organization, which is outside of the City limits. He said that Mrs. Laura Moss, City Councilmember, has spoken to him about planting trees on City property and she is very enthusiastic about it.

B) Approval of the Centennial Plaque Design

Mrs. Dussault said that they received a picture of the Centennial Tree plaque from Ms. Haynes and it is beautiful (on file in the City Clerk's office).

C) Commission Member's Ideas on the Wording for the Dedicatory Bench Plaque at the Centennial Tree Location

Mrs. Dussault asked if any of the Commission members had any suggestions for the wording on the plaque that will go on the dedicatory bench. She thought they should keep it simple and have it read "Dedicated to all the men and women who have served on the Tree and Beautification Commission", without naming names. Mrs. Robinson said that she likes the simplicity. Mrs. Dussault said that anytime you start naming people, inevitably someone is left out. It is unintentionally, but it happens.

Ms. Haynes asked when do they want the plaque installed. She explained that it takes four (4) to six (6) weeks to have it made. She stated if they are planning on paying for it from the Tree and Beautification Fund they need to make the request and have it put on a City Council agenda. She estimates the cost of the plaque to be about \$250. Mrs. Dussault replied that based on the time frame it will not be ready for the Centennial Tree Dedication Ceremony on Founder's Day in May. They can shoot for October, which is the final wrap up of the Centennial events. Mrs. Dussault asked to have the discussion of the final wording for the bench plaque placed on next month's agenda, then it can go to the City Council.

D) Recap of the Beautification Weekend Event

Mr. Roe reported that he put out the Beautification Weekend signs and collected them. He lost one (1) sign that was on the right-of-way near the east entrance to Holy Cross Catholic Church on the beachside. Mrs. Dussault said she will contact the church to see if they might have picked it up. She asked Mr. Roe if he ever received a copy of the location map from the Parkinson Association that he mentioned a few months ago. Mr. Roe replied no, but he can keep trying to get it for next year.

Mrs. Dussault stated that they need to start earlier and develop a better marketing program for next year's Beautification Weekend.

E) Update on the 100th Anniversary Events

Mrs. Dussault reported that the Tree and Beautification Commissions big day will be on Founder's Day, May 26, 2019. They will be dedicating their tree to the City and that will start at 1:30 p.m. May 26th is also the family day at Riverside Park and Riverside Theatre is providing tables for each of the Churches, Synagogues, Temples, etc. that are participating. There will also be choirs singing from for 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with each choir performing for 15 minutes. They are also anticipating a community choir, which she thought was a wonderful idea. There will be a bounce house for the children and many other activities. She will be going to another Centennial meeting, so she will have more information to report at the next Tree and Beautification Commission meeting.

Ms. Haynes reported that next week she is scheduled to lay out the pathway leading to the patio where the plaque and benches will be located for the Centennial Tree. The Facilities Department will be building the pedestal for the plaque. She asked the Commission members if they were okay with her installing Hibiscus plants around the perimeter of the patio. The Commission members were all in favor of the Hibiscus plants.

Ms. Haynes asked the Commission if they would like to have the plaque installed once the pedestal is built and then cover it, or do they want to wait and install it closer to the dedication ceremony. Mrs. Dussault replied that she will check with Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, and let her know.

Mr. Roe asked Mrs. Dussault if she will be speaking at the tree dedication. Mrs. Dussault replied that she probably will, but it is open to all of the Tree and Beautification Commission members who would like to speak.

Mrs. Booth asked where will the tree dedication be taking place. Ms. Haynes replied that it will be at MacWilliam Park near the restrooms.

7. TREASURY REPORT

The Senior Administrative Assistant reported that she did not receive the treasury report from the Finance Department prior to today's meeting.

8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

A) Report on the Planning and Zoning Meeting and the City Council Meeting regarding the Ordinance on the Tree Replacement Fund.

Mrs. Dussault reported that she went to the Planning and Zoning Board meeting and they approved the Ordinance change to include the installation of irrigation. She and Ms. Schwarz attended the City Council meeting and they also approved the irrigation portion, which is very important to the Tree and Beautification Commission. However, the City Council did not take out the portion pertaining to the removing of invasive species, so they will have to go back on that change. She said she will do some research to find out when the removing of invasive species was added to the Ordinance.

Mrs. Dussault said she would like to show the Commission members some pictures of property (on file in the City Clerk's office). She displayed the pictures on the monitors and explained that the lot is owned by a family who followed all the rules necessary for the removal of the trees and paying into the mitigation fund. She said this family did nothing wrong, but she knows that some of these trees could not be relocated and she accepts that. However, she believes that some of the trees could have been relocated and this is part of what the Ordinance change would allow them to do. Trees can be relocated on site or off site, but the person relocating the trees needs to guarantee the health of them for one (1) year. It is obvious that it is easier to kill the tree, pay the money, and move on. She would like to change the Ordinance to allow trees to be relocated onto City property, now that they can provide irrigation. The preservation would still be on the developer initially, so that the City or Ms. Haynes and her Grounds Maintenance crew are not accountable for the life of the tree. She just wanted the Commission members to see that this type of destruction of trees is fine according to the City Ordinance, but if they are as concerned about the trees as they say they are then this needs to be fixed.

Mrs. Robinson said she had a tree removed at her home and she had to provide pictures and get a permit. She had to prove that the tree was hazardous. She asked what reasoning did this property owner have for removing all the trees, did they want to build something on the property.

Mrs. Dussault replied that the property owners wanted to build a home in a certain area on the property and all of the groups involved did everything they could do to preserve some of the trees. The mitigation fees they had to paid were substantial. The homeowners have every right to do what they want to do within the law and that is what they did. She wants the Tree and Beautification Commission to understand what they are trying to do when they ask for an Ordinance to be modified. They accomplished their first step of being able to install irrigation and the next step will be to try to relocate trees.

Mrs. Robinson asked what is the cost difference of having a tree relocated versus removing a tree. She stated that she had to pay \$2,500 to have her tree removed. Ms. Haynes explained that to relocate a tree they need to use a crane and the tree needs to be root pruned in advance, so it is a huge undertaking. All of that work can cost thousands of dollars and if they don't do it right and the tree dies, then it is just money wasted.

Ms. Schwarz stated that she was over near the Dog Park and the Volunteer Ambulance Squad recently and she noticed that there is a plaque on the property where the Vero Beach Rowing Club is going to build their building. To her it looks like they will be cutting down about 50

trees from that property. She thinks it would make more sense for the Rowing Club to build their building on the Power Plant land, so they don't have to remove any trees. Mr. Roe said it is a done deal and they are breaking ground on the building.

Mrs. Booth stated that the property had to go through an environmental assessment before it was even leased, based on the City Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Dussault replied that is correct. It had to go through many layers of approval.

Ms. Schwarz said it would have been nice if they would have had the opportunity to have a say on what happened to the trees. Mrs. Dussault said that in order to know about these types of situations they need to pay attention to the agendas for the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Council.

Mrs. Booth asked if this Commission can have a formal say on tree protection. Mrs. Dussault replied no. The Tree and Beautification Commission is an Advisory Commission. Their job is to advise the City as to trees and beautification within the City limits. If the Tree and Beautification Commission had been asked about the lease on the property they could have certainly voiced their opinion, or if the subject would have been brought up at a Tree and Beautification Commission meeting they could have made a motion to the City Council.

Mr. Roe explained that the Rowing Club wanted to be in the MacWilliam Park and Dog Park area and about a year ago they were granted a lease for that property and the installation of the floating dock. He asked Ms. Haynes if she was involved with any of the approval process for that property. Ms. Haynes replied no. She said that when plans are submitted there is a whole list of City Departments they have to go through for approval. The plans will go through Public Works, but it is for Engineering. She said if there were any questions pertaining to the trees, they would contact her. The Planning Department handles the Tree Protection Ordinance and they are looking at that when the plans come to them.

Mrs. Booth asked if there would be a way for the Tree and Beautification Commission to be advised of projects or situations where the Tree Protection Ordinance was in question. Mrs. Dussault said the Tree and Beautification Commission is an Advisory Commission. The Planning and Zoning Board is a decision making Board and part of their job is tree protection.

Mrs. Booth said that to be an Advisory Commission they need to know what is going on. Mrs. Dussault said that involves paying attention to anything that goes before the Planning and Zoning Board, what permits are being issued, etc., because it is all public records. There is nothing in a City Ordinance stipulating that the Tree and Beautification Commission needs to be notified.

9. MEMBER'S MATTERS

A) Discussion of Mrs. Katherine Booth's Best Practices Tree Pruning Methods Presentation from January

Mrs. Booth asked if the Commission members had a chance to review the presentation she gave, and if there were any questions. The Commission members did not have any questions.

Mrs. Dussault said that one (1) of the issues Mrs. Booth had was the poor tree pruning that took place in the neighborhood where she lives, but that is a County issue and not a City issue. Mrs. Booth said she just used that as an example. Her presentation included photos of trees in the County, but if they look around the City the same inappropriate pruning is taking place. She said she also gave this presentation to the County Commission, so she is not sure where to go to now with this information. Mrs. Dussault suggested that she give this presentation to the City Council. She would not be going to the City Council as a Representative of the Tree Commission, but as an individual with the knowledge about proper pruning procedures. The City Council will either say they are not interested, or they will direct her to someone else.

B) Discussion of the Tree Dedication pages on the City's Website – Mrs. Katherine Booth

Mrs. Booth explained that she went through the tree dedication pages on the City's website and some of the information seems to be outdated and she would like that to be changed. She said the brochure also has a drawing of a tree on it, which has a lot of big branches and very little foliage. She would like to see a different image being used. Also, the dedication tree specification page contains some nonnative tree recommendations, so she thought it would be good to have it updated. Ms. Hayes replied that the list was developed by the Tree and Beautification Commission many years ago. Originally the only tree they offered for a dedication was a Live Oak, but they recognized that was a dangerous practice and they expanded the list to include other trees that had a good life span and some flowering trees. They wanted a more diverse selection, but there is no mandate that everything has to be native. They do not want just a single species of tree, because if a disease ever attacked that species it would wipe them all out. She estimates that 99% of the trees they have used for dedicatory trees have been Live Oaks. They also need to offer trees that are smaller, because some areas will not accommodate a Live Oak Tree.

Mrs. Booth said that the Golden Rain Tree that is on the list is a category II invasive tree, so removing that would be a benefit. She said that the Indian River County Ordinance has an appendix of trees that are native to Indian River County.

Mrs. Dussault asked Mrs. Booth if there is anything else within those pages that she believes should be improved. Mrs. Booth replied no, just the three (3) items she discussed. Mrs. Dussault asked Mrs. Booth if she would like to take on that project. She can make the changes and bring it back to their April meeting for the Commission to discuss. Mrs. Booth replied that she would do that.

Mr. Roe asked if they could link the Counties information to the City's website. Ms. Haynes replied that she is not sure what is listed on the County's website, but she is responsible for any trees being planted on City property or in the City Parks. The trees have to be something she agrees with, because she has to maintain them. Some trees require more maintenance than others and some might not fit with their landscape design.

C) Recap of the Library Informational Meeting – Ms. Cynthia Schwarz

Ms. Schwarz reported that the week of her library informational meeting was the week they had bad rain storms and it was not advertised enough, so it was lightly attended. She said that Mr. Karl Zimmermann was there and he did a fabulous job. The arborist who spoke at the library meeting would like to come back, so he can go outside and show people what he is talking about when pruning trees.

Mrs. Dussault suggested that they try to hold the library programs on a Saturday, because many people visit the library on the weekends. She understands that Ms. Schwarz wanted to hold another library meeting in April, but perhaps they could move it to May because June is the start of hurricane season and pruning would be an appropriate subject.

Ms. Schwarz asked Mrs. Booth if she would like to do the May library informational program and give her presentation on pruning mature trees. Mrs. Booth replied yes.

Mrs. Robinson asked Ms. Schwarz if she advertised the event in the Vero Beach Flash. She explained that it is an email notification that is sent out to people who request it. Ms. Schwarz said she did not advertise it there, but she will look into that. Mrs. Dussault said that she should be able to advertise it on the City's Website.

Mr. Roe said he would like to encourage the Tree and Beautification Commission to work on their value (as a Commission) to the City, and the City Council. They are very tree heavy and he appreciates that, but he believes they might be missing an opportunity to create excitement if they could spend some more time on beautification. He said he noticed that along 18th Street several businesses have beautified their buildings and perhaps they could come up with a way to recognize them either monthly or quarterly. He would like to see the Commission improve their marketing by finding out how the City does their press releases and work with that same program. He stated that he was reviewing the agendas and minutes of several of the other Commissions and Boards and he noticed that the Economic Development Zone Committee is working on some of the same issues. One way they can find out what is going on in advance, or at least stay informed is by reviewing the agendas and minutes from the other Commission and Boards, which are on the City's website.

Mrs. Dussault said that the word beautification is boundless and she likes Mr. Roe's idea of recognizing those who have done their own beautification projects. She would like the Tree and Beautification Commission to also concentrate on the concept of beautification and think about ways they can beautify the City and bring those ideas back to future meetings. It could be something as simple as pressure washing sidewalks. She really wants to work on their marketing this year for all the reasons that have been discussed. Along with advising the City Council, the Tree and Beautification Commission is also charged with making sure they are complying with all the responsibilities of maintaining their status as a Tree City USA community. At a future meeting she would like Ms. Schwarz to bring back the information about the online courses that they can take with the Arbor Day Foundation in order to expand their Tree City USA designation. She said she will also look for some advice on how to develop their marketing.

Mrs. Robinson reported that nothing happened with the hanging baskets in downtown in December or January, but in February the dead plants were removed, the baskets were replanted and now they look very nice.

Ms. Haynes said when they were talking about recognizing businesses it reminded her of something from the past. She explained that when Mr. Tom White was Mayor he used to have a Mayor's Beautification Award. Every month he would choose a business that he thought was worthy of the award based on what they did to improve or beautify their property. The recipient would receive the Mayor's Award sign to place in front of their business.

Mrs. Booth asked if the Commission members can officially attend other non-City events on behalf of the Tree and Beautification Commission. Mrs. Dussault replied no, but they can certainly attend and support any event.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – April 18, 2019

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for April 18, 2019.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 11:10 a.m. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.