

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MINUTES
May 16, 2019 – 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:** 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) April 18, 2019

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2019 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Dussault asked to discuss item 5-D) at this time, because Mr. Roe asked to be excused from the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Dussault asked the visitors in the audience if they would like to come up and introduce themselves.

Miss Savana Winn, Vero Beach Resident, stated that she attends the Indian River Charter High School and every semester they are required to attend a government meeting and she chose this one.

Mr. Jules Winn said he is in 11th grade at the Charter High School and he was here to meet his government meeting requirement.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Updated Dedicatory Tree Specification List – Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager

Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, stated that she looked through the list of dedicatory trees that Mrs. Booth submitted. She explained that she is the one who selects the space and plants the trees and she will not cramp trees. There are only a couple of more spaces available at Riverside Park and typically, people want Live Oak trees. She explained that a

number of years ago they opened it up to allow existing trees to be used as dedicatory trees. She probably dedicates more existing trees than planting new ones. She has a few places at other Parks, such as Troy Moody, Charles Park, and Crestlawn Cemetery, but they are almost to the point of being saturated. She said that over the past 17 years she might have had about 10 tree requests that were not Live Oaks. They expanded the list to try to offer some alternatives to Live Oaks and to incorporate a little bit of a variety in the landscape. She said there are some areas that Live Oaks are not appropriate and will not do well, such as the beach Parks. She explained that she took a couple of trees off the original list.

Ms. Schwarz said it is interesting to see the Bauhinia Tree or Purple Orchid Tree on the list. Ms. Haynes said that they did not stay with just native trees, and they wanted to offer some flowering varieties. She said the Bauhinia Tree is fairly long lived and they have beautiful flowers. She stated that flowering trees are not normally as hardy during hurricanes, because they are a softer wood.

Ms. Haynes stated that she would like to address some of the trees that Mrs. Booth suggested adding to the list. She explained that the Red Bays have been completely eliminated from Indian River and Brevard County due to the Laurel Wilt disease. The Gumbo Limbo will not do very well if we receive a hard freeze. She said the Bald Cypress needs a specific area with more moisture to do well and the same goes for the Liquidambar Tree (Sweet Gum) which is not salt tolerant. Another reason she did not put Liquidambar on the list is that they produce fruit that have burs on them, so they are not good where people might walk dogs or are walking barefoot. She explained that people pay a lot of money for dedicatory trees and if it dies due to a hurricane, lightning, or a freeze the City is responsible for replacing it the first time. Mrs. Booth suggested that they discuss this again next month when all the Commission members have her list. Mrs. Dussault said they should let Ms. Haynes make her comments and then they can modify the list next month.

Ms. Schwarz asked Ms. Haynes how many times has she had to replant a dedicatory tree due to natural causes. Ms. Haynes replied that they have only lost three (3) dedicatory trees from a hurricane and they were replaced with money from a grant.

Mrs. Booth said that Keep Indian River Beautiful (KIRB) planted several Gumbo Limbo trees and that was the only type they wanted. Ms. Haynes said there are a couple of those trees on the beachside that are just beautiful. Ms. Schwarz said she would like to see that species left on the list, so people have options.

Mrs. Dussault asked Ms. Haynes to make her notes to Mrs. Booth's list and they will discuss it more in depth at the June meeting.

B) Discussion of Beautification Weekend – February 8th – 9th, 2020

Mrs. Dussault said that she is drawing attention to the Beautification Weekend because it falls on February 8 and 9, 2020, which is a week earlier than normal. She wants to get moving on this earlier this year. She announced that the Commission received information about a tree giveaway program that the City of Port St. Lucie is doing (on file in the City Clerk's office). The program

is called "Give a Tree". She read aloud some of the information about the program and stated that she made a phone call to Ms. Rebecca Booth to find out how they determine if someone is a City resident, but she has not heard back from her. She thought if Port St. Lucie had a program that worked, then maybe Vero Beach could also do it. She said she would love to be able to do this in conjunction with the Beautification Weekend event. Ms. Schwarz stated that based on what she read the group in Port St. Lucie is not as constricted with regulations of a Tree and Beautification Commission. Mrs. Dussault said that might be true, but she wants to know how they determine the person getting the tree is a City resident.

Mrs. Dussault said that Ms. Schwarz ran into a teacher at their Arbor Day event who said that one of her students received a tree seedling from the Tree and Beautification Commission about six (6) years ago and the tree is still growing and doing well. They could use this student's tree as an example to promote the tree giveaway program and the Beautification Weekend.

Mrs. Dussault explained the purpose and the history of the Beautification weekend for the benefit of the two (2) students attending the meeting.

C) Founder's Day Tree Dedication Program – May 26, 2019

Mrs. Dussault stated that everyone received a copy of the Founder's Day Tree Dedication program (on file in the City Clerk's office). The event is on May 26, 2019 starting at 1:30 p.m. but she would like the Commission members to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the event. She read the program and explained that after the tree dedication there will be a Founder's Day interfaith family celebration at Riverside Park.

Mrs. Robinson asked to clarify the location of the Centennial Tree Dedication. Mrs. Dussault explained that it is in MacWilliam Park just up from where they planted the Arbor Day tree.

Mrs. Dussault stated that the Centennial Tree area looks beautiful and she thanked Ms. Haynes and her crew for doing a wonderful job putting it all together.

Mr. Roe said he wanted to make sure that everyone that is involved with the Founders Day event at Riverside Park is aware of the Centennial Tree planting and the City's Beautification Weekend event. Mrs. Dussault stated that she has been involved with the Centennial Committee and the interfaith group and she has made them aware of these events, but she will mention them again.

Mrs. Dussault announced that on Sunday May 19th at 1:30 p.m. there will be a Centennial Tree Dedication at the First Baptist Family Life Center, and she plans to attend it. She would love to see this type of tree planting and dedication be adopted by many of the other interfaith groups.

Ms. Haynes asked if they want the dedicatory plaque covered or uncovered. Mrs. Dussault said that she would recommend leaving it uncovered, so that people can look at it when they arrive and then have a seat for the program. Ms. Haynes reported that the plaque was installed yesterday and the benches will be installed very soon.

D) Champion Tree / Palm Award Program

Mrs. Dussault stated that the Senior Administrative Assistant provided them each with the Champion Tree / Palm Award Program Resolution and information (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said they became a Tree Commission on December 1, 1981 and she thinks all this information is important to be able to share their history. She said that when they have their booth at the Centennial finale her goal is to have a brief synopsis of the Tree and Beautification Commission and their history in respect to the City. She read the third paragraph from the Resolution, which explains what the Resolution is about. She said the first winner of this program was the Ponytail Palm at the Garden Club.

Ms. Haynes stated that she just received a call from a resident who said he was going to fill out an application for this award program, which is coincidental that they are speaking about it.

Mrs. Dussault said she was not aware that this program existed, but it is a program that they should be encouraging all the time. Mrs. Booth suggested having the applications available at their booth in October. Mrs. Dussault agreed.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Discussion of the Arbor Day Foundation Community Canopy Program and/or Collaborating with the Audubon Society on a Tree Giveaway Program

Mrs. Dussault said they need to figure out what they are going to do and what program they want to pursue. Ms. Schwarz said now they have the Port St. Lucie program on the table to find out how they handle their tree giveaway. She thinks they should move this forward until the next meeting. Mrs. Robinson said that maybe after Port Saint Lucie gets through their giveaway they will have time to speak with Mrs. Dussault. Mrs. Dussault said the Port Saint Lucie program flyer is straight forward, but they need to figure out the logistics. Ms. Schwarz said that is why they were looking at the Community Canopy program with the Arbor Day Foundation, because the people register online and the tree is delivered to them. Mrs. Robinson said one of the problems with that program is that they are not putting themselves in front of the public.

Ms. Schwarz said if they use the Audubon Society's trees, it would not matter who receives the tree. Mrs. Dussault stated that if the Tree and Beautification Commission sponsors it they would still be limited to City residents. She would like to see them develop a program so they can have the information available at the Centennial finale. Mr. Roe said there are Vero Beach Neighborhood watch groups they could contact and that way they know the people they are giving trees to live in the City. Mrs. Dussault said they will discuss this more next month.

B) Final Wording of the Dedicatory Bench Plaque at the Centennial Tree Location and Select a Dedication Date

Mrs. Dussault said that they made a few changes to the wording at last month's meeting, but Ms. Haynes was not in attendance. They agreed to change the words "men and women" to "all those" and to add the year that the Tree commission was established. Mrs. Dussault asked the

Senior Administrative Assistant to write up the final wording and submit it to Ms. Haynes. The senior Administrative Assistant said that with the requested changes the plaque will read “Dedicated to all those who have served on the Tree and Beautification Commission. Established December 1, 1981”.

Mr. Roe made a motion to approve the changes to the wording of the bench plaque as discussed. Ms. Schwarz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Haynes asked to have the wording emailed to her and then she will get a price quote.

The Commission members and Ms. Haynes continued with discussing the number of benches that would be installed at the Centennial Dedicatory Tree site.

C) Recap of the Arbor Day Tree Planting

Ms. Schwarz commented that the children were fabulous and even though they were a younger group, they were still great. Mrs. Robinson said that the City Manager, the water truck driver, and herself all helped the children shovel the dirt around the tree. Mrs. Dussault explained that they had three (3) first grade classes, so there were about 100 children. Ms. Schwarz said that everyone loved the type of tree.

D) Discuss Possible Participation in the Centennial Parade – October 26, 2019

This item was discussed after item 2. A)

Mr. Roe reported that he spoke with people from the STEM program and they are very interested in being part of the parade. He also spoke with the Cultural Arts Village and they thought that being part of the parade with the Tree and Beautification Commission would highlight something they did together and that they could collaborate again with the Rotary Club and the Garden Club. He said there was interest from Mrs. Barbara Hoffman, Cultural Council, and she asked him to reach out to these other organizations to find out if they would like to participate. He stated that he also contacted DIGG Gardens nursery from the retail side to give them the opportunity to participate. This is as far as he has gotten, but there is interest.

Mrs. Robinson stated that she is a member of the Garden Club and they plan to participate in the parade. They have approximately 225 members and they talked about walking, wearing their hats and aprons, and possibly carrying flowers.

Mr. Roe explained that as he was talking with these groups he tied in the concept of beautification.

Mrs. Dussault explained that the application and the vehicle and driver information needs to be submitted by July 26, 2019. The Parade Committee will review the applications and the approved applicants will be notified by August 16, 2019. There will be a mandatory meeting of all the participants on October 25, 2019. There will also be two (2) other meetings between now and October 25th, but the dates have not been set. Mrs. Dussault gave Mr. Roe the application to

process as he contacts the other organizations. Mrs. Dussault said that after the parade, there will be a big festival and they are allowing the Parade Committee members and the parade participants to have tables at the Heritage Center. They can choose an inside or outside table. She said she wanted to make sure that the Commission members were okay with her getting a table to help promote the Tree and Beautification Commission and the Beautification Weekend. The other Commission members thought that was fine.

Mrs. Dussault asked if the Tree and Beautification Commission made a motion to approve their participation in the parade. She did not think their discussion got that far. Mrs. Schwarz stated they did not make a motion.

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to have a booth space for the City of Vero Beach Tree and Beautification Commission during the Centennial finale at the Heritage Center. Mr. Roe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mrs. Dussault reported that there have been no changes to the tree accounts since last month.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

A) Update on the 100th Anniversary Events

This item was discussed within the prior discussions.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Booth asked if there is any way to list the types of trees that have been mitigated on the treasury report, so they can see what type and how many have been removed. This might help the Commission decide what types of trees they should plant in the future. The Senior Administrative Assistant stated that the treasury report figures come from the Finance Department, but the types of trees that are removed is not part of that information. That information would come from the Planning and Development office. Ms. Haynes stated that she has never seen that information, but the Planning and Development Department approves what trees are removed. Mrs. Dussault said that if Mrs. Booth wants to request that information as a citizen she is welcome to do that, but the Commission does not have the authority to request that information. Mrs. Booth said it might be helpful to see a years worth of information, since they are concerned about the City's mature trees. Mrs. Dussault said she believes that information is a public record, so she should be able to obtain the information. Mrs. Dussault stated that their Commission cannot advise an organization or a City department on how they handle private property. Mrs. Booth said their Commission is listed as an Advisory Board. Ms. Haynes explained that the Tree and Beautification Commission is an Advisory Commission to the City Council pertaining to City property.

Ms. Schwarz explained that she reached out to multiple media agencies to the get word out about the library programs.

Ms. Schwarz said that she had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Bob Joy, Vero Beach Dog Park Chairman, and he stated that Coca Cola dedicated a tree at the Dog Park and she thought it was cool that Coca Cola would do that. It made her think about what they could do with dedicating trees there in the future. Ms. Haynes explained that she has nothing to do with the Dog Park, because that property is leased from the City. She said it is not unusual for corporations to do things like that, because every year they have a certain amount of projects they are required to do in the community. In fact, she just planted six (6) Sweet Bay Magnolias that were donated to the City by Anheuser-Busch and they are also going to be doing some work at Charles Park.

Ms. Schwarz reported on all the media sources that she contacted in getting the Library meetings and other functions of the Tree and Beautification Commission publicized.

Mrs. Booth asked Mrs. Dussault if she has attended any of the City Council meetings that would be of interest to the Tree and Beautification Commission. Mrs. Dussault replied that she does not attend all the meetings, but they are televised and the video is available to watch. If there was anything of interest she would have brought it up. She encourages all the Commission members to at least review the agendas for anything of importance.

Mrs. Booth said that along the sidewalk on Indian River Boulevard from 20th Street heading south the Brazilian Pepper Trees have taken over that area. She asked Ms. Haynes what was there before the Pepper Trees. Ms. Haynes stated that they have been there ever since she has been employed with the City. Those trees act as a buffer for the homes on the other side, so all she does is trim them back from the sidewalk. Mrs. Booth asked if there is anything that grows fast enough to take over the Brazilian Pepper if they are removed. Ms. Haynes replied that she is not sure if there is enough room between the Pepper Trees and the sidewalk to plant something and then remove the Pepper Trees.

Mrs. Booth said that that Ms. Daisy Packard with KIRB asked her to mention that they have grants available for beautification. Ms. Haynes replied that she works with Ms. Packard on a lot of projects. The most recent one (1) was along the boardwalk at Conn Beach where they replanted the bulb outs in the parking bays. A little bit of their grant money also helped with the Young Park seawall project. Mrs. Dussault explained that the Tree and Beautification Commission cannot apply for any grants, because they do not meet the requirements.

Mrs. Booth said she noticed that the stormwater ditches around the City are either sprayed with a herbicide or they are dredged. She believes that any kind of vegetation will help filter the stormwater runoff, so does it matter that the plants are there. Without the plants, there is a free flow of stormwater pollution going into the Lagoon. Ms. Haynes explained that any spraying or dredging is done by the County or the Indian River Farms Water Control District. The City's Stormwater Division only takes care of ditches behind people's homes and the culverts and ditches near the driveways. The City uses very little herbicide and most of the work is manual mowing and trimming.

Mrs. Booth asked if the City has any say on how the trees are pruned around the utility lines.

Ms. Haynes replied that when the City had the electric utility they did, but not anymore.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – June 20, 2019

Mrs. Dussault asked to be excused from the June 20, 2019 meeting.

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for June 20, 2019.

10. 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.

/rh