

**VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION
COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, September 20, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, Chris Runge; Member: Cynthia Schwarz, and Alternate Member #1, Fran Robinson, and Alternate Member #2, Neal Roe **Also Present:** Grounds Maintenance Manager, Nanette Haynes; Assistant City Attorney, Stefanie Beskovoyne and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused Absences: Barbara Leigh, Marilyn Black Dussault, and Elly Manov

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Runge 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) August 16, 2018

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2018 Tree and Beautification Commission meeting. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Richard Baker, President of the Pelican Island Audubon Society, said he would like to tell the Commission about two (2) projects they are doing that are kind of related to what the Tree and Beautification Commission is working on. The first one (1) is a project called "100,000 Trees for Life" where they will plant trees in Indian River County. The Audubon Society and the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) are the collaborators for this project, but other partners include the Indian River Land Trust, the Ocean Research Conservation Association (ORCA), the County Health Department, and the University of Florida Extension Service will help train people on how to keep their trees alive and healthy once they are planted. He said at the Audubon House they constructed a greenhouse that will be used to raise native plants, which will be distributed throughout the County. They will also be constructing a second greenhouse that will be used to grow native trees. They plan on planting a lot of Oak Trees, because they help the birds and caterpillars due to how long they live. He said the Audubon Society held a conference about transforming landscaping for the future last January at the Emerson Center and 362 people attended. They raised \$15,000 in sponsorship money from that conference. They will hold a second event on February 2, 2019 at the Indian River County Fairgrounds, where they will have eight (8) great speakers who will discuss different aspects of what types of plants to use, how to plant them, how to take care of them, etc. They will also have a great Landscape Architect attending from the West Coast of Florida who will work with the cities in this area to update their landscape Ordinances to cut the lawn space down by 50%. They want to produce yards that are less grass and more native plants, which will cut down on the cost of mowing and the use of chemicals and fertilizers.

Mr. Runge asked where do they propose planting the trees. Mr. Baker replied that the Indian River Land Trust is removing a lot of Australian Pine trees along the river, so they will be consuming a lot of the Oak Trees. They are interested in getting them into the schoolyards and to individual homeowners, especially in Wabasso, Gifford, and Fellsmere where they are lacking trees.

Mr. Runge stated that their program has great merit and they support it. He explained that a constraint that the Tree and Beautification Commission has is that they can only spend funds to plant trees on City property.

Mr. Baker stated that they will be growing many of these trees from acorns, because they think that by providing a smaller bare root tree they can sell them for just a few dollars. Potted trees can cost \$50.00 to \$65.00 and the smaller trees planted in the ground will grow much faster than potted trees.

Ms. Schwarz stated that the Tree and Beautification Commission had a similar project many years ago. They would sell small trees seedlings for a couple of dollars.

Mr. Baker stated that there are not any native nurseries around here, so that is why they want to have a nice nursery where people can come and purchase native plants and trees at a reasonable price.

Ms. Schwarz said that she commends them for their efforts and it is a huge undertaking to plant 100,000 trees. She stated that trees make communities safer and more cohesive.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Wording for Centennial Tree Plaque

Mr. Runge stated that they each received a copy of what Mrs. Dussault submitted for the wording on the Centennial Tree plaque (on file in the City Clerk's office). He asked the Senior Administrative Assistant to read it for the record. The Senior Administrative assistant read the wording.

Mr. Roe asked if there is a reason she left out the word "Beach". Ms. Schwarz stated that she believes that back when it became a City it was just Vero and not Vero Beach and the name was changed later. Mr. Runge suggested that they table this item until their next meeting when Mrs. Dussault is present.

B) Volunteers for Centennial School Tree Dedications

Mr. Runge asked the Commission members to look at the schedule that was provided for the school centennial tree dedications and inform the City Clerk's office of the dates they can attend (on file in the City Clerk's office).

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Cultural Arts Village Tree Plantings

Mr. Neil Sickterman, Cultural Arts Village, stated that they have been coordinating with the various City departments for several months to get the permission and the infrastructure conflicts resolved. He said that they have identified all the water lines that could be possible conflicts, staked out the areas where the trees will be planted, and they have been given permission to proceed. Additionally, they have secured the trees for the same budget that was originally agreed upon. The landscaper involved with this project took it upon himself to secure the trees so they would not be sold. They found the proper size trees, they have been given permission, and now they are working with the landscaper on a date to plant them in advance of the November 10, 2018 dedication ceremony.

Mr. Runge asked Mr. Sickterman to notify the City Clerk's office when they have the planting date scheduled. Mr. Sickterman said he would do that.

Mr. Sickterman explained that they were asked to not plant the trees on the weekends just in case a water line was struck. They will be hand digging the holes and a root barrier will be placed completely around the hole so that the roots will not cause any damage to the sidewalk or the water lines.

Mr. Runge asked if there have been any changes to the planting location of the trees. Mr. Sickterman stated that originally they were going to plant the south side of the road, but the City decided that the north side is preferable.

Mr. Runge asked Mr. Sickterman to submit a revised plan for the Tree and Beautification Commissions records.

Mr. Sickterman said he will find out the exact installation date and send it to the City Clerk's office.

Mrs. Barbara Hoffman, Cultural Arts Village, stated they are really pleased that everything is finalized and the dedication ceremony has been scheduled for November 10, 2018. She will be contacting Mrs. Fran Robinson to schedule a meeting with the residents in the Village who handle the events to make the final schedule and decide if there will be plaques.

Mrs. Robinson asked what time is the tree dedication on November 10, 2018. Mrs. Hoffman replied that it will start at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Haynes asked what plaques are they referring to for the Simpson Stopper trees.

Mr. Sickterman said that he does not know if there is a specific agreement for the plaques yet, but he did look at the option of placing medallions in the sidewalk in front of each tree. The installation of them would require a certain type of expensive drill bit and adhesive. Each medallion would be designed to reflect a particular decade of the City's Centennial, so this might be an elaborate means of creating plaques. Another option would be to place small plaques on posts in front of each tree, which would be substantially cheaper.

Ms. Schwarz asked how much would it cost to put the medallions in the sidewalk. Mr. Sickterman replied that he was given an estimate of \$500 for all of them. He explained that the

most expensive component would be the special drill bit that would cut into the cement. They would be flush to the surface so people cannot trip on them.

Ms. Haynes stated that Mr. Sickterman will need to meet with Mr. Steve Fuller, Streets Manager, to coordinate any drilling into the sidewalks.

B) Revised Tree Giveaway Project Timeline

Mr. Runge suggested that they eliminate the voucher completely from the tree giveaway project and make it a first come first serve type of program. They will want the vendors to commit to supplying 10 trees each and they will be given away on the Saturday of the Beautification Weekend in the parking lot at either the Vero Beach Police Department or City Hall. Any remaining trees can be donated by the vendors to be planted in City Parks or on City properties. Ms. Haynes explained that she has size standards she has to follow, so she does not normally plant small three (3) gallon trees on City property.

Ms. Schwarz said this new plan takes a lot of burden off the Commission.

C) Update on the 100th Anniversary

This item was tabled until their next meeting.

6. TREASURY REPORT

Mr. Runge reported that there is \$51,090.30 in the Tree Replacement/Mitigation fund and \$769.21 in the Tree Dedication/Planting Fund.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Runge stated that he asked Ms. Beskovoyne what is the difference between planting and installing a tree.

Ms. Beskovoyne said she asked Ms. Haynes and they could not come up with a clear delineation or why the word "installation" was removed from the City Ordinance. It might have just been a house keeping measure.

Mr. Runge explained that a lot goes into planting a tree. Along with the purchase of the tree they have to pay for the delivery, the equipment, fertilizer, labor, and the staking of the tree. The Commission's question is why can't they pay to install water lines if they have to pay for the other ancillary costs.

Ms. Beskovoyne replied that the way she interprets this section of the Code is that she does not see that boring and installing a water line and a meter really fits into the Tree Planting Ordinance with how it is defined. However, if the Commission wants to recommend changes to the Ordinance that is their prerogative, because it can be changed.

Mr. Runge said the reason he suggested it is because it would broaden their scope and ability to install a tree. Ms. Beskovoyne said that if they propose changes to the Ordinance that

incorporate the water line, the boring, the meter, etc. and the City Council goes for it then they can do a rewrite of the Ordinance.

Mr. Runge said that the Ordinance specifies maintenance, which could include pruning, watering, fertilizing, etc.

Ms. Beskovoyne said that she will take the Commission's direction on what changes they want to include in the Ordinance. She will bring it back to the Commission for their review and then submit it to the City Council. They will want to make it as specific as possible, because it is not just about installing a tree it is about watering the tree, preparing the area for the tree to be planted, and other procedures.

Mr. Runge said that if they take vacant land and add irrigation it makes it a more usable public space. Their goal is to be able to purchase the infrastructure, directional boards, water lines, water meters, permits, and to provide maintenance to the trees.

Ms. Beskovoyne said she will write up the changes to the Ordinance and bring it back to Tree and Beautification Commission at their next meeting. If they approve the language then they can move it forward to the City Council for their consideration.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Ms. Schwarz said that the artist who is interested in painting a mural on the walls near St. Helen Catholic Church contacted her last week and he wants to do it as soon as possible. His name is Mr. Christopher Sweeney and he has done other murals in town. She contacted Mr. Monte Falls, Public Works Director, and he sent her the paperwork and permit that needs to be submitted by the artist. She said she provided photos to the Commission members of the type of work Mr. Sweeney does (on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Runge said he does not think the Commission can approve an artist's work, because beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Ms. Haynes asked if he was doing it for free. Ms. Schwarz replied no. He is asking that the paint be provided for him. She explained that she asked the Art Club about doing a mural on these walls and they also asked how much they would be paid.

Ms. Beskovoyne suggested they make a recommendation to the City Council asking for their approval to make a donation up to the amount of funds that are in the account. Mr. Runge said he would be hesitant to donate everything that is in the account. Ms. Schwarz said she was thinking they might ask to donate \$200.

Mrs. Robinson asked if they should have a courtesy conversation with St. Helen Church, the other businesses, and the homeowners who surround those walls to get their input.

Mr. Runge said the Commission would need to see a rendering of what he plans to paint on the walls before he starts. Ms. Haynes stated that it will still need the City Council's approval.

Mr. Roe said there are several organizations such as the Arts Village, Main Street Vero Beach, the Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Hibiscus Festival, etc. that like to contribute to projects like this.

Mr. Baker explained that they just had a mural done on the Audubon House. He said that Don Smith Paint store sold them paint at cost, and they donated some free paint.

Ms. Haynes said this is such a diverse area and she agrees they might want to make sure those businesses, churches, and the residents accept the project. She also agrees that City Council will need to see what he will be painting.

Ms. Schwarz said that she will go back to Mr. Sweeney with this information. She said that both sides of the walls will need to be painted, or it will look unfinished.

Ms. Schwarz stated that another project she is working on is to sign up for the informational/speaking program that the Library offers. She said she will do the first session to help get the word out about the Tree and Beautification Commission. She thought that maybe they could do four (4) or five (5) a year.

Ms. Schwarz explained that she is also writing an article and supplying photos of the trees that were planted at Crestlawn Cemetery. It will be published in the free article section of the News Weekly newspaper. Going forward they can submit articles on other projects.

Mrs. Robinson stated that a few months ago Mr. Runge mentioned something about educational plant walks in the City Parks. Mr. Runge explained that it was a proposed project of planting native trees or shrubs to create an educational walking area. The trees would have plaques that list the names and some information about them. Mrs. Robinson said that she is part of a native plant tour group that could conduct walking tours through these types of areas if they were available.

Mr. Runge said that they discussed this project before and possibly applying for a grant for educational purposes. Ms. Haynes stated that she will look into what it might cost for plaques.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – October 18, 2018

The next meeting of the Tree and Beautification Commission is scheduled for October 18, 2018.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:07 a.m. Mr. Roe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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