



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD

Time/Place: July 12, 2022 1:00 pm at Municipal Parking Bldg 1

Members Present: Ms. Amy McLaughlin
Ms. Marlene Dial
Ms. Bobbi Holland
Ms. Anna Forbes
Mr. Alex Franklin
Ms. Lois Crichton
Ms. Brenda Ellis
Ms. Donna Graham
Ms. Susan Shumate
Ms. Marjorie Cooke

Members Absent: Ms. Jane Powell, excused

Staff and Guests: Mr. Mike Davis, Public Grounds Deputy Director
Mr. Brent Webster, Public Works Director
Ms. Lori Brannon, City Planner
Mr. Emmett Pepper, Council at Large
Mr. Dave Gilmore, GAI representative
Mr. Jacob Burns, GAI representative

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Ms. McLaughlin and the minutes of the June 14, 2022 meeting were approved as emailed.

Ms. Graham, Treasurer, reported a balance of \$132,996.04.

Public Right-of-Way Permit – Lisa Fisher Casto – did not attend

Court Street Bed Committee report – Ms. Crichton reported that her committee, including Ms. Graham and Ms. Forbes, met with Mr. Davis to discuss what worked well and what didn't in the past. They are approaching this with mindset of conservation of plant, water, manpower, as well as a butterfly and pollinator friendly in their selections. They want to add some foundational plantings so they would continue to be there in the bed, as well as adding some perennials and annuals. Once the plans for these beds are finalized, they would like to take the palette to other beds within the city so there will be continuity across the city.

Ruffner Park – GAI consultant Mr. Gilmore reported that the contract is back from the city, so they are ready to get started with the base mapping. They will be doing a site visit soon to add the existing trees

to their plans. They start the process by looking at sizes, forms, textures, shapes, seasonal interest, etc. Once they get several ideas for design and concepts, and decide on one that everybody is in agreement on, then they will take our plant suggestions and incorporate them in. Ms. Crichton asked about a timeline and Mr. Gilmore said that he had hopes to get the plans completed by August to start with September plantings. Mr. Franklin asked about the possibility of problems getting materials, and Mr. Davis said he didn't think there would be an issue. Mr. Gilmore asked Ms. Brannon about the bid process and she indicated that there wouldn't be a delay since it would only require 3 quotes on plant material prices. Ms. McLaughlin acknowledged Mr. Pepper and he asked to share a few thoughts on Ruffner Park, which included the possibility of a Shakespeare in the Park, diversity in plantings rather than all structured beds. Mr. Gilmore also brought up the point that the history of this being a cemetery and how it fits in with the use of the park.

A discussion was held about the marble monument and where the sign used to be. Ms. McLaughlin shared that Historic Preservation would be helping with that component, as well as Lori Brannon and Jeff Pierson. This will be a function of all the committees. Further discussion was held about Mr. Pepper's thoughts on the Shakespeare in the Park idea, and while this is just a suggestion on his part, Ms. Graham brought up the point about the reverence of the park and how this is a cemetery should be taken into account. Ms. McLaughlin pointed out that we are the body that can regulate what functions can occur in the park.

Plant Recommendations for Ruffner – Ms. Graham suggested service berries. We discussed what trees are left from the derecho, such as a couple of dogwoods. Flowering cherries and redbuds were suggested to be added. Ms. Graham suggested the pale pink native rhododendrons as a backdrop along the fence line. Ms. McLaughlin said there is one sweet bay magnolia left in the park. We asked Mr. Davis about the propagating being done at the park when we last took a field trip. He said it was Kenny Williams and he would check with him. Ms. Graham asked him to propagate the few azaleas left, which she believes were Harry Wise's, who specialized in rhododendrons and azaleas in this area. 8 pin oaks are still present (from being planted in 1958) as well as 2 black maples. The 3 hemlocks that went in the 70's will be checked by an arborist and will more than likely need to be removed. Ms. Forbes requested a sugar maple. Ms. Crichton mentioned the one non-native plant she didn't want to see in there is the yucca and several agreed. Ms. McLaughlin countered with her favor for it because of what it symbolizes (for people who couldn't afford tombstones, for a whole different socio-economic class) because the cemetery wasn't just the "upper crust" and the history would be good to educate people with the labeling. Ms. Forbes suggested herbs, such as a rosemary hedge and lavender.

Davis Park benches – Mr. Davis said that the 6" steel benches with a single divider is \$2038 with a possibility of a discount for multiple ordered. Ms. Forbes created a map of Davis Park with the location of the benches. Ms. Dial brought up the dead memorial tree, which was her mother's. Mr Davis said they will be removing it and Ms. Dial indicated that it could be replaced

. Ms. Forbes brought up the problems with the existing benches and the vagrants using them for their "stuff". It was mutually decided to start removing all the C style benches and the 3 straight benches on the Capitol St side, replacing the ones on the Capitol St side, including the straight benches, with 9 of the 6" steel benches. Also, to paint the remaining benches on the Summers St side a forest green. Ms. Forbes suggested proposing a "bench buy" program to Kanawha Garden Club once they resume meeting in September.

Consulting Horticulturist – Mr. Webster has not reached out to Eleanor Gould since she now has a full time job and expressed concern that she may not be available when needed. He thinks that there has been \$25,000 allotted for the position and is not sure how many hours that will cover. Ms. Cooke said she would call Ms. Gould to discuss this with her. It was decided that the job should be posted in the meanwhile.

Public Director's Report – Mr. Davis said they are back on track after regatta. The hanging baskets are still in progress and once they are complete, the Edgewood brick project will be next on their list. The recent storms have kept them busy with tree removal and they are catching up on mowing. Mr. Webster shared some more input on the projects including the problem with the living wall and parts of the plants were dried up, even though the watering system is working fine.

After property damage occurred from a falling treetop during the recent storms, residents on the 4600 block of Venable Ave. submitted a petition to Public Grounds requesting that all 10 pin oaks be removed. Mr. Davis is having a forester check to see if the trees are diseased or not. We, as the tree board, need to check this out and make a decision one way or another as this will set a precedent for future streets in KC. In checking further, Ms McLaughlin found that the development company acquired that land in 1914 and she thinks the trees went in around 1925. We will include this on next month's agenda after the forester reports and our members have visited the site.

Mr. Webster also mentioned the Gold Star Mother's Memorial Plot on Patrick St, saying the date for the memorial has moved to September. They may need to resod and add lights before then.

Public Art Director's report – Mr. Pierson was not in attendance.

Additional business - none

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 pm.