



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD

November 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Time: Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 1:00 pm
Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1
Commissioners: Amy McLaughlin, Chair
Brenda Ellis, Vice Chair
Donna Graham, Treasurer
John Casto
Marjorie Cooke, Secretary
Lois Crichton (excused)
Marlene Dial
Anna Forbes
Alex Franklin
Jane Powell
Susan Shumate
Staff and Guests: Lori Brannon, City Planner
Mike Davis, Public Grounds Deputy Director
Brent Webster, Public Works Director
Barbara Rose, Kanawha Garden Club
Liz Moss, WVSU Extension Educator of Natural Resources
Eden Clymire-Stern, WVSU Extension Educator
Jorge Rvera, WVSU Extension Associate
Andy Sheetz, WV Department of Forestry

Municipal Beautification Commission (MBC) Chair, Amy McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. The meeting was recorded for the purpose of capturing accurate minutes.

Tree Board Business:

Elizabeth Moss, WVSU Extension Educator and certified arborist, spoke to the commission about the Tree Minders Services that offers a free Tree Inventory service as well as a data hosting services through **WVSU Educational Programs & Technical Assistance**. A tree inventory is of interest to the Tree Board as a requirement for a Tree City USA program application, and as a way of proactively assessing and maintaining municipal trees, by understanding their overall health, mapped location, species, size, general health, hazards, and maintenance needs.

Tree inventories can take time and money. The City of Parkersburg and Charleston's Spring Hill Cemetery paid substantial sums for tree inventories. WVSU would hire interns to inventory all of Charleston's municipal trees at no cost. This would allow the commission to manage tree maintenance, and would allow categorization – like high priority, diseased, low priority. WVSU can offer a public

facing and private facing side of tree inventory and a new tree inventory could be overlayed on the city's GIS system. Liz Moss noted that they are still working on the back end/hosting side of the data and that their coder works slowly, though estimated a year to finish a Charleston tree inventory.

Upon completion, a WVSU Charleston Tree Inventory would include a data set of (ground assessed) trees presented in spreadsheet form, an overview map of the trees, as well as a recommended maintenance and diversification plan with measurable goals. Amy McLaughlin asked the commissioners to absorb this proposal, while Brent and Mike will consult the Mayor. Commissioners were asked to come to the December meeting ready to vote on whether or not to ask WVSU to complete a street inventory for the Tree Board.

Tree City USA: Amy McLaughlin reviewed the requirements for MBC to apply for Tree City USA status. We are the entity that must apply, not the Green Team, as first thought. MBC would need to apply online by December 31, 2022 to be considered. We would need to select a point person, plan a small Arbor Day Celebration, and identify the source of spending of at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry. We could use Anndy Sheetz's Arbor Day banner to promote an event. Brenda Ellis made a motion to approve submission of an online TREE CITY USA application for the City of Charleston which was seconded by John Casto, and carried by a voice vote of the commissioners present.

Municipal Beautification Commission Business:

Approval of Minutes:

Brenda Ellis made a motion to approve minutes of the October 4, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by Marlene Dial and approved by a voice vote of the commissioners.

Brenda Ellis made a motion to approve minutes of the October 14, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by Marlene Dial and approved by a voice vote of the commissioners.

Treasurer's Report:

Donna Graham presented a treasurer's report, noting that \$127,322.51 was the MBC's starting monthly account balance. With a \$600 payment made to GAI and added interest in the amount of \$334.67, left a total of \$127, 057.18 at the end of October. With earmarks set aside for Davis Park Benches (\$18,000), Ruffner Park Implementation (\$45,000), and Contingency (\$16,000), there is a working remaining balance of \$46,057.18

Ruffner Park ReDesign Installation Phase Budget Development:

Amy McLaughlin led discussion of certain items on the first draft working budget, seeking basic approval for material concept and numbers. Commissioners agreed upon pathway and flora materials. Fixtures were discussed at greater length with commissioners suggesting different benches, perhaps to match those in Davis Park. A water fountain could be replaced/installed at a later time, to compliment the improvement plans for Capital Gateway Project. Approval will be required to remove/replace six light poles. The consensus among commissioners was that solar bollard lighting is preferred, as digging/wiring is not required. Questions were raised about whether there is enough sunlight in the park to support solar lights. Planters would need to be anchored to the ground and a volunteer group would need to be responsible for planting annuals and their maintenance. Amy McLaughlin will rework the budget and present a next draft soon to the commissioners for review.

Amy McLaughlin shared Kanawha Garden Club's proposal to spearhead/take ownership of the enhanced entry hardscape aspect of the park redesign, that has an estimated engineering budget of \$14,000. This arrangement might allow MBC avoid the three bid process. The City has evaluated this arrangement and may want to draw up an agreement with KGC. A \$14,000 enhanced entryway to Ruffner Park, and \$10,000 worth of native plants, KGC is considering a generous \$24,000 to the overall project. Next step is to have Barbara Rose meet onsite with GAI to discuss specific details.

Mary Price Ratrie Gateway Greenspace:

Alex Franklin raised questions about how this public park is classified and who is responsible for its maintenance. Currently, public grounds mows the grass and the city has added lighting, but it is not a passive park under city code that the MBC is responsible for maintaining. It was recommended to change the city code to include the Gateway Greenspace as a public passive park. Alex Franklin will speak to someone at the Clay Center about possible maintenance of the park.

By-Laws Committee Report:

Anna Forbes reported on her extensive work with Alex Franklin, and city attorney Kevin Baker, on updating the MBC By-Laws. Policy considerations include: Annual meeting in November, Role of Mayor, Voting Issues, Term Limits, Standing Committees, Removal from office, and Conflicts of Interest, among others. Addendums will include: Best Practices and New Commission Member orientation. Anna Forbes will circulate an email a draft with their recommendations and requests that commissioners evaluate and email Anna and Alex with any suggested changes by November 20.

Approval of MBC 2022 Annual Report:

Brenda Ellis made a motion to approve the MBC 2022 Annual Report (written by Amy McLaughlin), which was seconded by Donna Graham and approved by a voice vote of the commissioners.

MBC Nominating Committee Report:

After thanking all who have given their time to serve as officers the past year, John Casto presented a motion to accept the slate of MBC Officers as presented below for the upcoming one-year term beginning December 2022 and running through November 2023. His motion was seconded by Jane Powell and approved by a voice vote of the commissioners.

Anna Forbes, Chair
Brenda Ellis, Vice Chair
Donna Graham, Treasurer
Marjorie Cooke, Secretary

Public Grounds Director's Report:

Mike Davis reported that city grass mowing was almost complete and that bulb planting was to begin soon. Two tree removals will happen soon and his crew are working to put up 101 live Christmas Trees for the holiday season.

The next meeting of the Municipal Beautification Commission/Tree Board is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6th at 1 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marjorie Cooke

Marjorie Cooke, MBC Secretary