



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD

February 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Time: Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 1:00 pm

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

Commissioners Present: L. Anna Forbes, Chair
Brenda Craig-Ellis, Vice Chair
Marjorie Cooke, Secretary
Lois Crichton
Marlene Dial
Jane Powell
Susan Shumate

Absent (excused): Donna Graham, Treasurer
John Casto
Alex Franklin

Staff and Guests: Jeff Pierson, Director of Public Art
Mike Davis, Public Grounds Deputy Director
Brent Webster, Public Works Director
Barbara Rose, Kanawha Garden Club
Maurice Graham, BID ambassador
Dorothy Scharf

Call to Order & Agenda

Ms. Forbes welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The January 3, 2023 minutes were circulated to commissioners prior the meeting and presented for approval. Ms. Crichton made a motion to approve, Ms. Shumate seconded, and the motion unanimously carried.

Public Arts Director's Report

Ms. Forbes welcomed Public Art Director Jeff Pierson, who shared a short video of 2022 public art in review, showcasing the various citywide works of art and community engagement. Mr. Pierson was thanked for his presentation.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Forbes reported for Donna Graham, Treasurer, who will return in March. The MBC account balance for December 2022 was \$126,891.22 and for January 2023, it is \$126,356.93. Upon her return, Ms. Graham will use this information to create Treasurer's reports for December and January.

General MBC Matters

Ms. Forbes reported on her recent meeting with Mayor Goodwin and Ms. Craig-Ellis. She reported that the Mayor was generally supportive of all topics discussed including: MBC and Tree Board ordinance amendments, a request that the City fund the MBC annually in the amount of \$100,000, and a special project funding request for Davis Park revitalization. Ms. Forbes and Ms. Ellis will work with City Attorney Kevin Baker over next several months on redefining some of the duties of the commission. City Council will need to approve some of these requests.

Ms. Forbes shared that the Mayor asked about how MBC is spending the \$100,000 we were given this past year, and suggested we put together a power point to showcase our impact. Ms. Forbes suggested a potential newspaper article about the new Court Street beds this spring.

Ms. Forbes suggested that commissioners bring ideas to the next meeting for consideration, especially ideas for the West Side.

City Horticulturist/City Arborist Positions

Ms. Forbes reported that the City Horticulturist/Arborist position(s) will be put on hold until the new City Manager is hired. She will continue to work with Mr. Webster about these positions in the coming weeks.

Tree City USA Status

Ms. Forbes noted that our Tree City USA initiative may be advancing after all. The City had been concerned that the initiative might impose on-going financial burdens or tree planting requirements on the City. Robert Hannah of the WV Division of Forestry advised Ms. Forbes that there were no ongoing requirements beyond the \$2 per capita set out in the third standard of the program. Ms. Forbes relayed Mr. Hannah's statement to the Mayor after her recent meeting with the Mayor. We will work with the City and try to have a tree planting ceremony, a Tree City USA proclamation, and work on amendments to our tree ordinances in the coming months. Ideally, we can meet the requirements for Tree City USA status and, if the City gives its approval, we can complete the Tree City application this year, which will make Charleston eligible for significant federal funding.

New MBC Commissioner

Ms. Forbes announced that the Mayor recently appointed and City Council confirmed a new MBC Commissioner, Lisa Dobbins, a West Side resident.

Ruffner Park Update

Ms. Dial questioned the fence at the back of Ruffner Park being in three sections. Mr. Davis agreed to take a look. He noted the remaining Elm tree will hopefully survive, but the large Sycamore will most likely have to come out.

Public Grounds Deputy Director's Report

Mr. Davis reported his department is cutting riprap on the river, cleaning up various beds, putting mulch down, picking up trash, and working on tree removal/trim list. Next week he will start ordering spring plants.

Tree Board Report

Ms. Forbes deferred discussion on the Tree Inventory Project until next month because Ms. Craig-Ellis, who is spearheading that project, needed a little additional time to address a couple issues. Mr. Webster mentioned that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and WVSU will be important with using GIS for the inventory. Ms. Craig-Ellis and Mr. Webster will discuss further with Elizabeth Moss from WVSU.

Amended Bylaws—Minor Revisions of Three Sections

The revised wording of three small sections of the Amended Bylaws were circulated for review prior the meeting. Ms. Crichton moved to approve the wording of these amendments, Ms. Dial seconded, and the motion was **approved**.

BID Meeting

Ms. Crichton reported on the previous days' Business Improvement District (BID) meeting, noting that EDA grant funding has begun paying for security, lighting, ambassador program and for work beyond the City Center. She raised the issue of striving to maintain a consistent look across the city with regard to lighting, benches, and plant materials, and was met with support from BID members.

The next MBC/Tree Board meeting is scheduled for 1 pm, March 7, 2023.

Submitted by Marjorie Cooke,
MBC Recording Secretary