



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
November 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes
DRAFT

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

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

Commissioners: L. Anna Forbes, Chair
Brenda Craig-Ellis, Vice Chair
Marjorie Cooke, Secretary
Donna Graham, Treasurer
Lois Crichton
Marlene Dial
Lisa Dobbins
Jane Powell
Susan Shumate
John Casto (absent)
Alex Franklin (absent)
Barbara Rose

Staff and Guests: Mike Davis, City Public Grounds Deputy Director
Brent Webster, City Public Works Director
Jeff Pierson, City Public Art Director
Sarah Gaskins, Kanawha Garden Club member
Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador
Mary Ellen O'Farrell, resident

Call to Order:

Chair Anna Forbes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 2023 MBC meeting were circulated to commissioners prior the meeting and presented for approval. Lois Crichton made a motion to approve, Brenda Craig-Ellis seconded, and the minutes were *approved* as written.

Treasurer's Report: Donna Graham presented the report, noting we had a balance of \$112,809.57 in our MBC account. The additional \$100,000 for 2024 remains in the city's general fund and is available when needed. The Treasurer's Report was *accepted* as presented.

MBC General Matters

MBC Annual Report: The final draft of the MBC Annual Report was previously circulated. Brenda Craig- Ellis made a motion to approve, Marjorie Cooke seconded, and the Annual Report was *approved*. Anna will provide the report to the Mayor later this week.

Ruffner Park: Barbara Rose reminded commissioners of our original bench choices and shared estimates of \$4,580 for two Robinson 6-foot with center arm, teak wood slat benches. Trash receptacle choice was Harmony 38-gallon with an estimate of \$3,370 for two, plus \$612 for shipping. The total for benches and trash receptacles would be \$8,562. Two water fountains were estimated at \$4,510. Susan Shumate made a motion to approve purchases of up to \$20,000 for benches, trash receptacles, and water fountains, and possible bike rack, Marlene Dial seconded. Motion was ***approved***. (Color choices for water fountains and teak wood choices can be made at a later time.)

Agreement among commissioners that a unified planter design across the city would be ideal. Consider bulk purchase for attractive cohesive design across city, if possible. Lois will coordinate with BID about planter choice and research estimates. Lighting choice for Ruffner Park will be made at a later meeting, with AEP coordination needed for pole access.

Marlene Dial reported on Park Side Place's \$3 million dollar steel beam replacement project (to address foundational problems) scheduled for this spring. Major work on right side of apartment building will require a lift and tree work. There was discussion of how this work will interfere with MBC's installation and planting work, also scheduled for the next six months in the park. It was noted that contractors will take out the hedge line next to the apartments and a lift will go up the 9th floor. Concerns were shared about material storage and staging, tree work. Contractor is Paramount. Marlene shared her belief that the project will only disrupt a narrow lane between the building and the park, with limited damage to any future MBC plantings. She is under the impression that the contractor will replace the hedge line, once finished.

It was agreed that MBC will proceed with planned Ruffner Park spring planting with new material that is scheduled to start arriving November 13, making sure there is ongoing communication between the city, the contractor and MBC.

Brent Webster shared the City's timeline for planting.

Weeks 11/13 - 11/22 – Install crushed stone and gravel, mound earth

Weeks 11/27 - 12/8 - Transplant 2 trees, lay out and install flower beds, install flagstone path

Weeks 12/10 - 12/22 - Plant along back and side fence, plant front beds and around monument

Weeks 12/27 - 1/5/24 - Mulch beds

April/May and into Spring - Fit and finish, plant grass and plant fall sensitive plants.

Public Arts Commission: Jeff Pierson provided an update on the George Snyder sculpture proposal. The City recently made decision to demolish and remove the Shanklin Park fountain. The site is now being considered for a new Jeff Fetty designed base to hold the sculpture. There is a small place for plants or grasses and the City is looking at a possible spring installation, prior to Regatta. Donna Graham made a motion to accept the proposed concept (rendering was circulated at the meeting) for a new base for Snyder sculpture for Shanklin Park. Brenda Craig- Ellis seconded the motion, which was then ***approved*** by the commission.

Committee Membership:

Shanklin Park: Anna noted that we need to give this small park some attention, especially with the Snyder sculpture being installed. The MBC will explore installing planters or possibly a living wall in the park.

City Gardens Committee: (formerly called Court Street Committee) Volunteers were requested for bulb planting for Thursday, November 9th at 8 am bulb to assist the city. The City is in possession of Donna's hand-colored schematic for the beds.

Additional Living Wall: Anna Forbes suggested commissioners consider a location for another living wall in the city. Shanklin Park was suggested, as it has water and sufficient sunshine. She also noted her concerns over the

fenced wall across from Clay Center and asked commissioners to consider possibilities, one of which is purchase and installation of fake boxwood to cover fence. Susan Shumate agreed to lead this initiative.

100-Tree Initiative: Lisa Dobbins reported on goal of planting the first 10 trees by December 15, and the balance of the trees would be planted this spring. Lisa asked commissioners to consider purchasing 100 trees at \$200 each for the project. Lois Crichton made the motion to purchase up to \$20,000 worth of trees to plant around the City at designated locations, with particular attention paid to economically-disadvantaged communities. Jane Powell seconded the motion, and it was *approved* by the commissioners. Lisa noted the committee's goal to order all the trees soon and start planting next trees in March of 2024.

Draft of Public Tree Removal Policy and Standards: Anna Forbes reported on her efforts to formalize our removal policy, as outlined in our Tree Ordinance. The MBC is tasked with preparing and adopting the urban tree specifications and standard of practice and submit such rules to the city council for its approval. This has never been done before, as far as Anna is aware. Anna previously circulated a written draft of the policy. Anna suggested one edit. Her suggestion is to add to last bullet ... *"And only following consultation with the tree board."* Brenda Craig-Ellis made the motion to add this verbiage to the removal policy, Barbara Rose seconded, and the motion was *approved*.

Anna decided to address this issue after the recent tree topping at the Carriage Trail. Kenny Williams was asked to top trees on the Carriage Trail for Farmer Cline and Campbell in order to maintain a "view." It is thought that perhaps having written standards may have slowed down the decision-making process, requiring further consultation with City arborists and others.

Mike Davis made his report, noting that he and his crew are working on Ruffner Park, Court Street beds, and tree installation. Brent emphasized that Ruffner Park was a top priority of Public Grounds. He was hopeful that planting would be done the last week of November.

Chair Anna Forbes announced the next meeting on **December 5th** at 1 pm and adjourned the meeting at 2:12 pm.

Submitted by Marjorie Cooke,
MBC Recording Secretary