



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD

December 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Time: Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 1:00 pm

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

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

Staff and Guests: Mike Davis, City Public Grounds Deputy Director
Brent Webster, City Public Works Director
Sarah Gaskins, Kanawha Garden Club member
Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador
Ashley Perham, HD Media
Andy Sheetz, WV Division of Forestry

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the November 7, 2023 Municipal Beautification Commission (MBC) were circulated to commissioners prior to the meeting and presented for approval. Mr. Franklin moved to approve, Ms. Dial seconded, and the minutes of November 7, 2023 were ***approved***.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Graham presented the Treasurer's Report, noting the earmarked funds for Ruffner Park implementation, 100-Tree Initiative, and our contingency set-aside. After all current bills were paid, the remaining balance in the MBC account is \$132,305.63, with an additional \$100,000 in the city's general account. The treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

MBC General Matters:

Ruffner Park - Ms. Dial reported that the city has been planting trees in the park. Installation of a drinking fountain is being discussed and American Electric Power will repair/replace a damaged light pole. Barbara Rose is in the process of ordering benches and the water fountain.

BID Update – Ms. Crichton provided updates from the Business Improvement District (BID) meeting. Early projects, those expected to be installed within three years, include improved lighting and cameras to address safety and security concerns, stronger wi-fi in the BID, new planters, tree plantings, a Summers Street engineering plan, and improved parking within the BID.

City Planting Update – Ms. Forbes thanked Sarah Gaskins, Kanawha Garden Club, and others who participated in the recent bulb planting of median areas on Court Street.

Leon Sullivan Fence-- The public art incorporated into the fencing on Leon Sullivan Way is in disrepair.

Ms. Forbes spoke with Jeff Pierson about this space just prior to the meeting. Mr. Pierson advised that there was no maintenance plan for the fence artwork and that he would be open to exploring other ideas for that space. The commissioners discussed purchasing an artificial green “wall”, comprised of multiple panels that could be attached to the fence and resemble a boxwood hedge. Permission from the federal government will be needed since it owns the fence. Ms. Shumate will investigate possible green wall vendors, costs, and contacts with the federal government.

Living Wall – Report on the 2024 living wall was deferred until a future meeting.

Tree Board Matters

100-Tree Initiative – Ms. Graham reported that nine trees were scheduled to be planted in the South Park area by mid-December. A spring planting is scheduled for the Dixie Street Park and Edgewood area. In all 20 trees were planted in 2023!

Tree City USA – Ms. Forbes advised she anticipates completing the Tree City USA application for Charleston. MBC will need to have another Arbor Day tree planting ceremony this spring to secure Tree City USA status for next year. The ceremony will occur in April 2024.

Tree Inventory Update – Ms. Craig-Ellis reported that the West Virginia State University Extension has declined to conduct our tree survey. Brenda is exploring alternative providers. Andy Sheetz stressed the importance of choosing a provider who had a strong computer database. Possible providers include PlanIT Geo, Davey, and Bartlett Tree Experts. Finalists will give a presentation to MBC. Once the vendor is selected, the inventory is expected to take several years to complete.

Public Grounds Report:

Mr. Davis reported his department is working on planting at Ruffner Park and other parts of the city.

With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by Jane Powell