



**MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Time: Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 1:00 pm

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

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

Staff and Guests: Mike Davis, City Public Grounds Deputy Director
Brent Webster, City Public Works Director
Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador
Andy Sheetz, WV Department of Forestry
Chris Higgins, Spring Hill Cemetery

Call to Order

Vice Chair Brenda Craig-Ellis called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the December 2023 MBC meeting were circulated to commissioners prior to the meeting and presented for approval. Marlene Dial made a motion to approve, Marjorie Cooke seconded, and the minutes were *approved* as written.

Treasurer's Report: Report was circulated prior to the meeting. Brenda presented the report in Donna Graham's absence, noting that we received \$514.84 in interest and had a remaining balance at the end of December 2023 of \$213,820.47, which includes the \$100,000 allocation from the city. The Treasurer's Report was *accepted* as presented.

Tree Board Matters

100 Tree Initiative: Lisa Dobbins reported that 9 trees have been planted at Southpark in December and that the subcommittee's next meeting was scheduled for March at Shoney's.

Tree City USA Status: Anna Forbes reported good news that MBC's Tree City USA application has been completed. Bob Hannah of the WV Division of Forestry has approved our application and has sent it along to the Arbor Day Foundation. Anna anticipates receiving approval in the next few months and suggested choosing a location and a Friday in April for our required Arbor Day ceremony and tree planting. Anna asked if Brenda, Lisa, and Donna could take to lead on planning an event, coordinating with Andy Sheets and inviting Chris Higgins to participate.

MBC General Matters

Ruffner Park Update: Barbara Rose reported that the concrete work had been completed at the entrance of the park, with the stone work to be completed next. Marlene noted that the cold weather may delay stone work. It was noted that there is now a ramp as part of the park entrance, making it more accessible.

BID Update: Lois Chichton had no update.

City Planters: Barbara Rose reported on conversations about MBC coordinating with the BID to purchase the same grey silver metal planters, consistent with GAI consultant recommendations. These planters are already in use at the library and at Shonk Plaza. Barbara shared the idea of buying two groups of these grey planters for use in Davis Park, adding some color to the downtown park. Lois, Anna, and Barbara will take a field trip soon to decide where they should go and how many would work well in Davis Park. It was understood that this is a four season project and requires not just planting, but watering as well.

Barbara reported that she has ordered benches for Ruffner Park. She is looking at water fountain possibilities, specifically a mid-range fountain that includes a bottle filler, a pet station, and drinking fountain for humans. She hopes to have a firm recommendation and price at our next meeting.

Leon Sullivan Fence Update: Anna Forbes shared that Jeff Pierson is open to suggestions for how to handle the public art fence on Leon Sullivan Way that has fallen into disrepair. Anna learned from Jeff that there is no maintenance fund or plan for this installation. Marjorie Cooke shared that she had researched some solutions, specifically an attractive fake boxwood product that can be purchased in rolls and affixed to fences with zip ties. Marjorie will work with Susan Shumate to determine rough cost estimates to consider and will bring samples to the next meeting. The post office will have to approve any new plan, which may take some time. It was suggested that MBC work with Susie Salisbury, who worked on the previous installation.

Public Grounds Report: Mike Davis reported on his crew's slower pace of work in January, including preparing plant/flower order lists and working on hangers for new baskets. Anna asked if MBC might offer suggestions for flower choices and he agreed, noting that he would like to get those recommendations soon. Barbara, Marjorie and Anna will help Mike with plant selections and recommendations prior to February, if possible.

When asked about work at Ruffner Park, Mike shared that the city has planted as much as they could before winter. He noted that the mounds are in, and are settling now, and that some prep work and flag stone path work still need to be done. He shared his goal for early spring flower planting.

Additional Business: Andy Sheets shared that the US Forest Service has opened the application for IRA grant funding for tree planting. He noted that there is close to \$1 Million in funds available this grant cycle and that no match is required. Andy agreed to send the grant application to Brenda.

Vice Chair Brenda adjourned the meeting at 1:25 pm.

Submitted by Marjorie Cooke,
MBC Recording Secretary