



**MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
February 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Time: Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 1:00 pm

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

Commissioners: Anna Forbes, Chair
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
Barbara Rose

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

Call to Order:

Chair Anna Forbes called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 2024 MBC meeting were circulated to commissioners prior the meeting and presented for approval. Marlene Dial made a motion to approve, John Casto seconded, and the minutes were *approved* as written.

Treasurer's Report: Anna Forbes presented the report for Donna Graham, noting that after the earmarks, we had a remaining balance of \$133,336.24. The Treasurer's Report was *accepted* as presented.

MBC GENERAL MATTERS

Ruffner Park Update: Barbara Rose reported that the stone entrance to the park is finished and looks terrific. Scott Means did the sandstone and limestone work. Commissioners were pleased with progress.

Barbara reported that two benches and two trash receptacles have been ordered and that 3 bids for water fountain are being reviewed. Images were circulated.

It was noted that the city crew is able now to get back in for work. A suggestion was made to take photographs of park now before the work at Park Place begins for documentation purposes. The idea of saving the row of boxwoods by transplanting them temporarily to use somewhere else in the park, or to donate to the Craik-Patton House. Marlene was asked to talk to the project managers to save the boxwoods and not remove them.

Anna reported that a new Park Place resident wants to put a sculpture in the park. She advised she would reach out to the resident and would recommend the resident bring her proposal to the commission for our review.

BID Update: Lois Crichton reported that a BID subcommittee plans to purchase flower planters and has earmarked \$46,000 from a variety of sources (City, HUD, TGKVF, and BHGC funds) to do so. She noted BID locations for four clusters of three planters each: 1) Fruth Pharmacy, 2) United Bank/Va./Court Street, 3) Summers Street in front of Brawley Walkway, 4) Court Street/Summers Street-Fife Street side.

Davis Park: MBC subcommittee of Anna, Barbara, and Lois, met at Davis Park to consider planters, noting that the park looked pretty good, despite some cigarette butt trash. Lois made a request of the city to install a new cigarette butt receptacle near the WV DHHR building. Darker color planters (in the same style as the BID) were recommended for Davis Park to keep some continuity with the BID. Lois noted MBC will try to obtain discounted pricing for planters for Davis Park by ordering from the same vendor that the BID is using.

Lois shared her subcommittee's recommendation to purchase and place one new black planter on either side of the six black benches in the first circle on the Capitol Street side of Davis Park. This would be Phase 1: 12 planters in front circle, with two larger planters at the entrance of the park, for a total of 14. The goal is to work with BID and GAI to get better bulk pricing from vendor. Lois Crichton made a motion to approve ***purchase of 14 black planters***, with a price not to exceed **\$30,000**. Brenda Craig-Ellis seconded the motion. After discussion about prices and phases, and a note that expenditures over \$25,000 must go to city council, the motion was ***approved***. It was noted that watering and maintenance will be critical to the success of these planters.

Lois shared her sub-committee recommendation to purchase and place an additional 16 black metal benches on the Summers Street side of the park, matching those already installed on the Capitol Street side. This is the second phase of the bench replacement project MBC started last year. John Casto made a motion to approve the ***purchase of 16 metal benches*** at approximately \$1,800 each, with a total project price not to exceed **\$30,000**. Barbara Rose seconded the motion. Motion was ***approved***.

Leon Sullivan Fence Update: Anna reported that Susan Shumate has reached out to a firm in Cincinnati about faux boxwood greenery for post office fence possibilities. Anna will contact the postmaster prior to the next meeting. Marjorie Cooke passed around some samples and shared an estimate of \$45,700 for a boxwood matt Commercial Silk Product sold by PlantScape Inc. out of Minneapolis. Anna noted that some private donors may be willing to cover cost for this project. Once we have a green light from the post office, she will reach out to possible donors.

Living Wall Update: John Casto reported on his and Jane Powell's meeting with Mike to discuss plant choices for next year's living wall at City Center. He shared an idea of creating a design in the flowers on

the wall, like lines of color to represent sky and mountains. The company that sold us the vertical planters has offered to assist with suggestions of plants to cascade flowers, hiding the installation. Anna will provide customer service contact information at the company. Plant selections will be made for the wall soon, taking into consideration Jane and John's suggestions.

TREE BOARD MATTERS

The 100-Tree Initiative Update: Brenda Craig-Ellis reported that Edgewood Elementary School (she showed google earth images of barren school property) plans to host our Arbor Day celebration on the 2nd or 4th Friday and plant 3 or more trees. (WV Division of Forestry will give us one) Lisa will work with the Vice Principal about choosing a date for Arbor Day in April 2024.

Brenda then reported that the committee has a plan for 75-80 trees, with 9 trees having been planted already. Planting will resume in March. Committee was made aware that Piedmont Elementary School has recently lost the state's largest red bud, a large pin oak, and a blue spruce, and may be a good location for new trees or perhaps the location of next year's Arbor Day celebration.

Tree Inventory Update: Brenda reported on working to gather tree inventory estimates from:

Davey Tree: Davey provided multiple estimates: one for 25,000 trees, planting sites, stumps for \$168,100; and one for 5,000 trees, planting sites, stumps ~honing in on "Justice 40" areas ~ for \$69,100)

LIDAR: Brenda and Anna will hear pitch presentation on this digital laser scanner way to count trees and assess viability and cost.

Planet Geo: They have asked for more information before submitting estimate. (Spring Hill Cemetery used this company for their inventory)

Bartlett Tree: They have asked for more information before submitting estimate.

Andy Sheets noted that TreeKeeper is not as user-friendly as Planet GEO's user interface. He further noted that this kind of tree inventory can and probably will take many years to finish.

Public Grounds Report—Mike Davis reported that he and crew will take advantage of good weather to work in Ruffner Park and clean up rip rap on riverbank. He noted that work will commence soon on hanging baskets along boulevard. Anna noted a subcommittee's recommendation to plant all city hanging baskets with red wax begonias called "Angel Wings" this year. Several commissioners have admired similar hanging baskets in Lewisburg, WV.

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

Submitted by Marjorie Cooke,
MBC Recording Secretary