



**MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
March 5, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Time: Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 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 (absent)
Marlene Dial
Lisa Dobbins
Jane Powell
Susan Shumate
John Casto
Alex Franklin
Barbara Rose (absent)

Staff and Guests: Mike Davis, City Public Grounds Deputy Director
Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador
Chris Higgins, Spring Hill Cemetery
Ashley Perham, Gazette Mail
Sarah Gaskins, Kanawha Garden Club

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 2024 MBC meeting were circulated to commissioners prior the meeting and presented for approval. Susan Shumate 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 that after the earmarks, the Commission had a remaining balance of \$133,820.92. Donna, who did not attend last month's meeting, noted that this report did not reflect the two expenses (Davis Park benches and flower planters) the commission approved last month. She will distribute a revised report before our next meeting. With that understanding, the Treasurer's Report was *accepted* as presented.

MBC GENERAL MATTERS

Ruffner Park Update: Mike Davis reported that Davis Park trash receptacles and benches that were ordered will arrive in mid-April and will be installed then. Mike reported that his crew is working in

Ruffner Park almost daily, preparing the large beds along the back of the park. One shipment of Ruffner Park plants is in and are expected to be planted soon.

Marlene noted that construction on the Park Side Place building is slated to begin April 1st. The construction equipment will encroach into west side of the park. Marlene indicated that the row of boxwoods along that side will have to be removed. Discussion ensued about salvaging the boxwoods and transplanting the boxwoods to another area of Ruffner Park or, perhaps, Davis Park, Spring Hill, Craik-Patton, or Holly Grove. Anna plans to meet with Mike to determine if boxwoods can all stay in Ruffner Park.

Leon Sullivan Fence Update: Anna reported that she met with John Litton, the current administrator at the downtown post office and asked for permission to update the fence alongside Leon Sullivan Way. Anna showed him a sample of the artificial greenery mats that we are thinking of using. Mr. Litton had no objection to the project and said it would be a good improvement. Anna also reached out to Susie Salisbury for ideas for possible private-sector funding sources. Anna will reach out to potential donors. Marjorie shared some estimates from [FenceScreen](#) that provides commercial grade boxwood rolls, with a total product cost of \$11,000.

Davis Park Update: Mike received a quote for \$17,500 for the 16 benches and armrests that were approved at the last meeting. He noted that the benches were in stock, but the armrests were on back order for 10-12 weeks. Given this cost estimate, Donna Graham will lower the earmark from last month's meeting from \$30,000 to \$18,000 for the purchase of new benches. As the commission previously approved the purchase of these benches, Anna asked Mike to place the order.

Shanklin Park Update: One commissioner asked about progress. Jeff Fetty was working on the base on which the art would be installed once the water feature is removed.

Miscellaneous: Donna Graham made a proposal for a new planter for the Lee Street triangle garden. Donna made motion to purchase another matching planter for the Lee Street triangle garden not to exceed \$1,500, seconded by Brenda Craig-Ellis. The motion was approved. Anna advised Donna to coordinate with Lois about exact size of planter to order.

TREE BOARD MATTERS

Tree City USA and Arbor Day Celebration:

Anna reported that Charleston was approved by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA! There will be an Arbor Day Celebration on April 12th at noon at Edgewood Elementary School. The mayor will attend. One large dogwood will be planted, a mulch border will surround the tree, and a PVC pipe will be placed around the base of the tree. More trees will be planted at Edgewood Elementary School at a later time. A teacher at the school is a certified arborist and will help take care of the newly planted tree.

The 100-Tree Initiative Update: Donna Graham reported on the work being done by this active sub-committee, noting that Dixie Street Park will have trees planted soon. The Seventh Street North Charleston area will not be a possibility for new trees because of a number of practical challenges. Brenda Craig-Ellis and Lisa Dobbins attended a Zoom meeting concerning the Community EquiTree Grant Program with Chris Bodkin. Overall, 9 trees have been planted, the remaining 91 will be planted this spring!

Tree Inventory Update: Brenda reported that she met with John Butterworth about city limits for our tree inventory estimates. City will send a shape file of the city will be sent to Davey, Planet Geo, and Bartlett Tree. She pointed out that a separate shape file needs to be designated for the lower income regions. She has asked for “carve outs” for Kanawha City and Spring Hill cemetery. Companies will provide estimates soon and can make presentations to the commission.

Miscellaneous: Anna recommended the resource Sibley Tree Guide by David Alley Sibley, available on Amazon.

Public Grounds Report: Mike Davis reported that he is starting spring preparation. Flowers for baskets are out for quotes. Mike hopes to plant flower baskets in mid-May. New hanging baskets (which the commission suggested last year) will be installed on MacCorkle Avenue from the Patrick Street area down to the Elk River bridge.

Chair Anna Forbes announced the next meeting on **April 2, 2024**, at 1 pm. and adjourned the meeting at 1:49 pm.

Submitted by Marjorie Cooke,
MBC Secretary