



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
August 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes

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

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

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

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
Renata Pore, Friends of Ruffner Cemetery & Park
Ashley Perham, city reporter
Lisa McDavid

Call to Order: Vice Chair Brenda Craig Ellis called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

Brenda Craig Ellis welcomed and introduced new Commissioner, Jason Testman, who is the Landscape Architect at Valley Gardens and has over 20 years of landscape architecture experience.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the July 2, 2024 MBC meeting were circulated to commissioners prior to the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded and the Board ***approved*** the minutes as written.

Treasurer's Report: Donna Graham presented the financial report noting that after earmarks, the Commission had a remaining balance of \$87,259.09. She noted that there are Davis Park, Ruffner Park, and Lee Street Triangle expenses that will be withdrawn from the MBC account in the coming months. The Treasurer's Report was ***accepted*** as presented.

Ruffner Park Update: Mike Davis reported that all dead trees had been cut down and berms had been removed. There was discussion of the health and location of a birch tree at the edge of the park. The Friends of Ruffner Cemetery and Park group suggested that this tree should come down. The City is reluctant to cut down a living tree. The Commission may have to weigh in on this decision. Mid-October was suggested for fall planting of new plant material. Mike has a list of plants to order. Questions remain about whether the city, or hired contractors, will install new plant

material. It was understood that proposals were being gathered to understand the cost for contractors. Brent suggested waiting on the installation of benches, trash containers and water fountain until closer to the end of the project, so no damage is done with large equipment.

Renate Pore reported that the Friends of Ruffner Cemetery and Park group has committed to raising \$15K for plantings and maintenance of the Park. As part of this effort, they have applied for \$5K grant funds from The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation to be available in December.

The Ruffner Park subcommittee (Barbara Rose, Susan Shumate, and Anna Forbes) has met once, but has nothing to report at this time.

Leon Sullivan Fence Update: Barbara Rose reported that Anna Forbes submitted three quotes for the faux greenery product to hide the fence to the City manager on June 28. A response came on July 31, with a promise to forward the quotes to the City purchasing manager. An approval is expected soon.

BID Update: Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador, gave a report thanking Mike Davis and his crew for the planting of the BID district planters. Photographs were circulated of the new planters and plants. Sid has been watering planters daily.

Living Wall Update: Mike Davis reported some vandalism at the living wall. A section of flowers was pulled out in the middle of the night leaving a large vacant space. As the current hot weather is not conducive for planting, Mike suggested ordering pansies from Gritt's Farm to plant on the wall around mid-September.

100 Tree Initiate Update: Lisa Dobbins, Donna Graham and Brenda met and discussed ways to encourage homeowners to plant trees on private property where MBC does not have jurisdiction to do so. Upon researching the issue, the committee discovered that through the Arbor Day Foundation, in part, a Connecticut community received funding and instruction on how to plant trees, etc. To date, the Committee has not had success in engaging the Arbor Day Foundation to assist in the matter. Research on this issue continues.

Community EQUITREE Grant update: Brenda reported that MBC is waiting on the City business manager to approve language in the bid for the Tree Inventory project. Once it is approved, the bids will be sent to Davey Tree, Planet Geo, Bartlett Trees, and Terra Care. City Council must approve the vendor, based upon at least three bids. Grant funding will be a reimbursement of monies spent on the tree inventory. Efforts to move the process forward continue. It was noted that MBC will begin work on a second grant application for an additional \$50K grant soon.

Tree City USA Sign Placement: Brent Webster reported that he has two signs with plans to put one at the bottom of the Carriage Trail and one at Haddad Riverfront Park. Brent will follow up with Parks and Rec to mount on an existing post, if possible. A recommendation was made to contact Chris Higgins about where to put a sign at Spring Hill Cemetery. No decision was made about specific sign location near the Capitol.

Public Grounds Report: Mike Davis reported that his crew is now playing catch up, working on right of ways and watering hanging baskets. He noted that all trees had been planted.

Renate Pore asked a question about how a neighbor whose wife died recently might make a donation of a tree in her memory. Mike suggested waiting until after the Capitol Connector Project for the planting of a memorial tree.

With no further business, Brenda Craig Ellis concluded the meeting at 2:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marjorie Cooke, MBC Recording Secretary