



MUNICIPAL BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION/TREE BOARD
September 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Time: Tuesday, September 3, 2024, 1:00 pm

Place: Charleston Municipal Parking Building #1

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

Staff and Guests: 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

Call to Order: Vice Chair Brenda Craig-Ellis called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 6, 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 reported \$3,970 in expenses for Ruffner Park water fountain, \$917.68 in interest and a remaining balance of \$88,176.77 after earmarks. The Treasurer's Report was *accepted* as presented.

MBC General Matters

Ruffner Park Landscaping Update: Anna reported on receiving one of several expected landscaping bids from local firms for the landscaping work in Ruffner Park. The working group comprised of Barbara Rose, Lois Crichton, Susan Shumate, and Anna Forbes, anticipates receiving all bids prior to the next meeting, when a vendor will be selected to complete the outsourced work for park planting.

Renata Pore reported that the volunteer group has chosen the name Friends of Ruffner Cemetery and Park and has raised \$3,000 in donations. Plans are to raise additional funds with a letter writing campaign for residential and corporate support. She made another request for a cherry tree (Dave Milan's memorial tree for his wife) with a recommendation to place it at the back of the Park. A decision was made to wait until a consultant is hired and his recommendations of how the tree would fit into the park obtained before taking any action on her request.

Leon Sullivan Fence Update: Barbara Rose reported that the private donation to pay for the faux fence greenery has been made and received by the city. The City Manager's Office will now purchase the product. It was noted that the City will provide workers for installation once the product arrives. Volunteers were suggested as a way to help get the greenery installed as soon as possible, if notice is provided by the City.

BID Update: Lois Crichton thanked Sid Gillis for watering the plants in newly placed BID planters. The planters are receiving positive comments and the choice of plant materials seemed to have worked well. She noted artistic wrap bids were being considered to cover utility/mechanical boxes in the district.

Living Wall Update: There was discussion of wanting living wall flowers to look good for the spring bike race, scheduled for May 20-25, 2025. Brent reported that Mike Davis has ordered pansies which will be planted by early October, with the hope that they would last until mid or late May. A decision was made to take a wait and see attitude watching the weather in the spring to determine if new spring flowers need to be planted.

Tree Board Matters

100 Tree Initiate Update: Donna Graham reported on the subcommittee's continued research on a possible tree planting on private property project, learning what other communities have done and how to support giving trees to individuals in underserved areas such as the West Side and North Charleston.

Community EQUITREE Grant (Tree Inventory) Update: Brenda reported that she received email confirmation that three bids have been received by the city, and that they will soon to be presented to the commission for selection of a vendor. Anna thanked Bob Hannah for being a great partner on this project.

Public Grounds Report: Brent Webster reported that the City will be re-sodding the grass area at City Center in mid-October. He reported that one sign had been installed at the foot of Carriage Trail, but that Mayor Goodwin does not support a sign at Haddad Riverfront Park. Discussion ensued about placement of other Tree USA signs. Jason Testman volunteered to bring a list of possible sign locations to the next meeting for approval. Brent further reported that the tulips for fall planting had been ordered. He noted that the old Davis Park benches were pulled out and that the new benches were not configured well to fit well in their place. Lois agreed to meet with Mike to determine the best solution for the problem.

Old Business

Renata Pore made a request to remove an unsightly tree in Ruffner Park, which Mike Davis had established as still living, necessitating MBC action to remove it. A motion was made and seconded to have Jason Testman to take a look at the tree and make a recommendation to Mike whether to remove it or not. The MBC will support his decision. Motion was *approved* by a voice vote of commissioners present.

A commissioner noted that the Kanawha Blvd lower sidewalk ditches were full and needed city attention. A commissioner noted that the Dickinson Garden needed attention and that dead hostas needed to be cut back.

Marjorie Cooke reported that she is working on a draft letter to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a Letter of Understanding for the proposed invasive vine cutting work to save trees on either side of the South Side Bridge, by concerned citizen Bev Campbell, with support from the MBC. We are seeking a signed Letter of Understanding and hope to allow work to begin in November.

With no further business, Brenda Craig Ellis concluded the meeting at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marjorie Cooke, MBC Recording Secretary