



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

Time: Tuesday, December 3, 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
Lois Crichton
Marlene Dial
Lisa Dobbins (absent)
Jane Powell (absent)
Susan Shumate
John Casto
Barbara Rose
Jason Testman

Staff and Guests: Mayor Amy Shuler Goodwin
Brent Webster, City Public Works Director
Mike Davis, City Public Grounds Deputy Director
Sid Gillis, BID Ambassador
Renata Pore, Friends of Ruffner Cemetery & Park
Chris Higgins, City Arborist, Spring Hill Cemetery
Lisa McDavid

Call to Order: Anna Forbes called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the November 6, 2024, MBC meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded, and the Board *approved* the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Donna Graham presented the report noting a \$10,000 grant for Ruffner Park from the Garden Club of America that was obtained through the efforts of the Kanawha Garden Club. Interest earned was \$728.40 for a total balance of \$197,873.55. Earmarks total \$96,230.89 with a remaining balance after earmarks of \$101,642.66.

MBC General Matters

Ruffner Park: Anna reported the Ruffner Park landscaping subcommittee (Anna, Barbara Rose, Susan Shumate, and Lois Crichton) had met November 19 with four representatives from Terra Care, including the owner Ryan Tierney, to discuss the six-month Ruffner Park landscaping pilot project. After reviewing GAI's plan, several plant recommendations were made, including pink weigela (instead of Diablo Ninebark shrub), and Korean boxwoods (instead of winter green boxwood). Terra Care recommended planting arborvitae along the back fence line. For security issues, a redesign was suggested to redirect the left circular footpath away from the building and wrap it to the right of two spruce trees. The result means the path will not be circular and will not mirror the path on the

other side of the park. Terra Care noted it would be optimal if path work were completed prior to tree and shrub planting. It was agreed that communication needs to continue among all parties, as we navigate this new partnership.

Renate Pore requested a lit holiday tree for Ruffner Park. It was agreed that MBC would reimburse this expense from anticipated grant funds from TGKVF for park improvements. A suggestion was made to consider planting an evergreen tree near the power pole so that the park could have a living holiday tree every year.

Renate thanked the MBC for our public-private partnership work to improve the park.

New private donation: Anna Forbes reported MBC would be receiving an unexpected private donation.

Arbor Day/Tree City USA Signs: Anna reported plans to re-up our Tree City USA status by the end of this month. After brief discussion, it was agreed for MBC to order four new \$75 Tree City USA signs, which had been previously approved at \$60 each. Jason Testman shared ideas for two signs placed on State Capitol grounds. It was agreed that Brent Webster would install a second sign at the trailhead of the Wallace Hartman preserve on Loudon Heights Road.

BID Update: Lois Crichton reported that Chris Higgins, City Arborist, got to work immediately after our November meeting and assessed trees in the BID, at the BID's request for an inventory. Chris and Sid Gillis created a spreadsheet noting all 61 trees and any condition issues. Lois noted that a trash receptacle decision had not yet been made by the BID. Commissioners present asked that the minutes reflect appreciation for Chris Higgins' work and prompt attention to this matter.

Tree Board Matters

Charleston Tree Initiative: Brenda Craig-Ellis reported on a recent revision of the city RFP for the Tree Inventory project, with an effort to split and itemize different locations of the city for pricing purposes. This will allow the MBC to select what locations to prioritize. Anna took a moment to thank Brenda for her dedicated work and many hours spent on this tree inventory project.

Public Grounds Report: Mike Davis reported that Public Grounds plans to finish work on Christmas preparations. He shared that spring bulbs had been planted in city beds, and that he will soon turn attention Ruffner Park for work on footpaths. He noted that his plant list was in the hands of various vendors now and bids are beginning to come in.

Additional Business:

Donna Graham reported that perennials had been added to the pollinator garden. Donna requested zinnias and trailing lantana for this garden.

Mayor Amy Goodwin stood and thanked the members of the Municipal Beautification Commission for our work, crediting us for being the hardest working committee in the city!

Brenda reported that the city Cares team will report to the MBC next month.

Marjorie Cooke noted that Bev Campbell and Chris Higgins will soon start work on the small riverbank invasive vines cutting project to allow the tree stock to thrive.

With no further business, Anna Forbes concluded the meeting at 1:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marjorie Cooke, MBC Recording Secretary