

## **VERO BEACH TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Thursday, January 16, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Marilyn Black Dussault; Vice Chairman, Cynthia Schwarz; Members: Fran Robinson, Neal Roe and Katherine Booth **Also Present:** John Turner, City Attorney and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

Chairman Dussault opened the meeting up at 5:30 p.m. and announced that they would be moving their meeting to the upstairs Training Room.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Dussault called the meeting to order and the City Clerk performed the roll call.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **A) December 19, 2019**

**Ms. Schwarz made a motion to approve the minutes. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mrs. Tiffney Battle and her son Bryan were at tonight's meeting. Bryan explained he attends Indian River Charter High School and has to attend so many government meetings a year.

Mrs. Kelly Foster and her daughter Kelly were at tonight's meeting for the same reason.

### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A) Arbor Day Article "How Trees Protect Our Water" – Requested by Mrs. Katherine Booth**

Mrs. Booth wanted to make sure that the Commission members had received a copy of the article "How Trees Protect Our Water" that recently appeared in the Arbor Day magazine. She said that the article is very educational. She did not realize that trees tame stormwater by retaining huge quantities of water on their leaves and bark, making it available for evaporation or slowly releasing it into the soil.

### **5. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A) Annual Report**

Chairman Dussault explained that their Annual Report was completed last month minus the balance that they have in their Tree Replacement/Mitigation Fund, which has now been included in the report. This report will be presented to the City Council at their February 18<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. She said these Annual Reports are presented to Council to show them what the different Commissions have accomplished for the year.

Chairman Dussault briefly went over the items contained in this year's Annual Report.

**B) Finalize the Beautification Weekend Plans - February 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Publicity, Marketing, and Yard Signs**

Chairman Dussault noted that Mr. Roe was not at today's meeting. He has the list of where the Beautification Signs will be placed. She reminded the Commission members to take the signs with them before they leave today. She asked the City Clerk to get the information from Mr. Roe about where the signs should be placed and email it to the members.

For beautification week, the Commission is encouraging individuals to improve their property or help someone else improve their property if they are unable to do so. Chairman Dussault briefly went over the history of when Beautification Week was formed and why they chose to reinstitute it. Going back to the signs, she reminded the Commission that the signs can go out the Thursday before their event and the signs must be picked up on Sunday. The signs are allowed to go on the public right-of-way, unless it is on your own personal property. The Tree and Beautification Commission chose not to put up the big banner this year.

**C) Discuss Revised Publicity News Articles from Mrs. Katherine Booth**

There were two (2) versions of the "Saving Our Live Oaks" article. The first one (1) without footnotes and the second article with the footnotes attached (on file in the City Clerk's office).

Chairman Dussault asked Mrs. Booth where did she plan to publish this article.

Mrs. Booth said that Ms. Schwarz has that contact information.

Chairman Dussault wanted to make sure that Mrs. Booth planned on publishing the long article (article containing the footnotes).

Mrs. Booth did not think that she could get the long version published because usually only 200 to 250 words are allowed.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, explained that in order for the Tree and Beautification Commission to publish an article, permission needs to be given first from the City Council.

Chairman Dussault encouraged Mrs. Booth to use the article containing the footnotes. She again asked Mrs. Booth where does she plan on publishing the article. She told her that they would need to have the City Attorney and City Clerk review the article before it is taken to the City Council for final approval.

Ms. Schwartz explained that if it were to appear in the Newsweekly, the article would need to contain between 200 to 250 words and it would be published as a news article.

Mrs. Booth commented that she has never published an article before so she was not familiar with where it needed to be published.

Mrs. Robinson expressed that the article appears to be more than 250 words.

Chairman Dussault advised Mrs. Booth to do some research and come up with some other places where the article could be published.

Ms. Schwarz suggested having it published in the Arbor Day newsletter.

Mrs. Robinson agreed with Ms. Schwarz's suggestion. She said that unless the article is published in a place such as the Arbor Day newsletter probably the average person is not going to read it.

This item was tabled until next month's meeting. The Commission will determine where the article is going to be published before taking it to the City Council for approval.

## **6. TREASURY REPORT**

There was not a Treasury Report given.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Chairman Dussault brought up the email sent to the Planning and Development Director from Mrs. Booth. She said in the email it stated: *The Tree and Beautification Commission requests that the numbers and types of trees mitigated in October as reflected by an additional amount of \$15,619.00 added to the Tree Funding Reserves report under the section, Current Fiscal Year Revenues, be identified and a revised report provided to our Commission for the January meeting. Signed by Katherine Booth Member City of Vero Beach Tree and Beautification Commission.* Chairman Dussault made it clear that the Tree Commission did not give approval for her to make this request.

Mrs. Booth explained that she thought that she had approval to make this request because the Tree and Beautification Commission talked about it at their last meeting under the "Treasury Report."

Chairman Dussault referred to the minutes of December 19, 2019 where it states: *Mrs. Dussault said that the Planning and Development Department would have that information. If she wants to go to the Planning and Development Department, through the public records they will be able to tell her what the designation was in respect to what trees were removed. Mrs. Booth replied okay, thank you.* Chairman Dussault explained that nowhere did it say that the Tree and Beautification Commission was requesting this information.

Mr. Turner briefly went over what staff's job is in terms of the different Commissions. He suggested that if the Commission has a request that they take it to the City Manager. He said a private citizen asking for public records goes to the City Clerk for any information that they are requesting and they are given the information if it exists. If someone needs assistance, they should go through the City Manager or the Commission needs to make a motion that clearly states what they need or are looking for.

Chairman Dussault apologized to Mrs. Booth if she was not being clear on what their duties as Tree and Beautification Commission are. A motion must be made and approved by the Commission before any action takes place. It is misrepresentation to ask for this information as a Tree and Beautification Commission member and the Commission did not vote on it.

Mrs. Booth asked where would she find the details of where this money came from.

Ms. Schwarz recalled that when Mr. Jeffries appeared before them at one (1) of their previous meetings, he made it clear that this information does not exist. They were told by Mr. Jeffries that this information does not need to be collected.

Chairman Dussault brought up the Proclamation proclaiming Beautification Weekend. She said that the Proclamation would be read at the February 4<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting that starts at 8:30 a.m. She encouraged all the members to attend that meeting and feel free to say something.

The Tours of the old Power Plant will take place on January 18<sup>th</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup>. The Commission members were encouraged to go to [SpeakUpVero.com](http://SpeakUpVero.com) and express their opinions on what they would like to see happen at the old Power Plant site.

The Pelican Island Audubon Society's third annual "Transforming Landscapes for a Sustainable Future" Conference will be held at the Emerson Center on Saturday, January 25, 2020.

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Robinson announced that tomorrow is Florida Arbor Day, even though the Tree and Beautification Commission does not celebrate it on that day.

Mrs. Robinson wondered if next year they would like to coordinate with the County and ask them to join the Tree and Beautification Commission in celebrating their Beautification Weekend.

Chairman Dussault thought that was a great idea. She said all they will need to do is make a motion to that effect and she will take it to the City Council and if they approve it, then she will go to the County Commission to find out if they are interested. She said they can discuss this at their next meeting to decide if they want to proceed with it. She said there is nothing wrong with including the greater Vero Beach in the Beautification Weekend.

Mrs. Robinson had some questions about pruning Sabal Palms. She will ask her questions at the next meeting when Ms. Haynes is present.

Mrs. Robinson brought up their beautification project and asked if there is a piece of property that seems to be an eye-sore to the community, what would be the procedure to report it.

Chairman Dussault commented that they are just an Advisory Commission to the City Council and it would be stretching their roles if they started getting into code enforcement.

Ms. Schwarz commented that she would like to start again having her quarterly programs at the Library. She plans on inviting Dr. Baker to speak at her next event. She will make sure that he is very specific on what he is going to speak about.

Mr. Turner told her that it is her call on what she wants him to speak on.

Chairman Dussault added that Dr. Baker is welcome to talk about his Tree give-away program and explain how it works.

Ms. Schwarz would like the Tree and Beautification Commission to get more involved in working with the local schools on upcoming school projects.

Chairman Dussault expressed that the Tree and Beautification Commission is limited to just the City of Vero Beach and there are not many schools located just in the City limits.

**9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

**A) Next Meeting Date – February 20, 2020**

The next Tree and Beautification Commission meeting will take place on February 20, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. (back to their regular time).

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Schwarz made a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting at 6:34 p.m. Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

/tb