

# TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, April 21, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.

City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida

**PRESENT:** Katherine Booth, Chairman; Fran Robinson, Vice Chairman; Members: Rebeca Siplak, Opal Nelson and Cindy Roberts **Also Present:** Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney; Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager and Tammy Bursick, City Clerk

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Today's meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

At this time, each Commission member introduced themselves and gave some brief background on their qualifications.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### A) March 17, 2022

Mrs. Booth said that Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, discussed workshops at the March 17, 2022, Tree and Beautification Commission meeting. She asked that his references to workshops be added to the minutes.

Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney, explained that the minutes are a summary and their vote should be on if they accurately reflect what occurred at the meeting.

Mrs. Booth said it was mentioned several times that there were going to be workshops, however none of that was in the minutes and Ms. Siplak had asked a question about the workshops, but there was nothing to reference that question to.

Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, explained that the minutes are not done verbatim.

Mrs. Booth thought it might be confusing to someone reading the minutes because there was a question about workshops, but there was nothing mentioned prior to that. To her that was an inaccuracy.

**Mrs. Robinson moved to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2022 as presented. Ms. Siplak seconded the motion and it passed 4-1 with Mrs. Booth voting no.**

## 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

## 4. REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS (Previously Mailed Out)

### A) Sunshine Law PDF

### B) Tree City USA Eligibility Requirements on the Arbor Day Foundation Website

Mrs. Booth asked that the Commission members receive the Tree City USA monthly newsletters via email rather than receiving hard copies.

**C) Link to City Ordinance Chapter 72 – Landscaping and Tree Protection (Reference to Florida Urban Forestry Council for Central Regions is Outdated in Chapter 72 – Does Not Exist)**

Mrs. Booth stated that the Florida Urban Forestry Council for Central Regions no longer exists, but it is still referenced in the City’s Ordinance.

Ms. Flanigan said that could be easily changed. She said that she would also speak with Mr. Jeffries to see if he has any other updates for that Chapter.

**D) Link to Comprehensive Management Plan**  
**E) The Memo to the City Council Referred to in the March Tree and Beautification Commission Meeting**

Mrs. Booth asked if Mr. Jeffries would be attending today’s meeting to answer questions.

Mrs. Bursick said that Mr. Jeffries was not available to attend today’s meeting.

Mrs. Booth asked Mrs. Bursick to ask Mr. Jeffries to attend their next meeting.

**F) The Most Recent Annual Report and Expenditures Required to Maintain Tree City USA**

Mrs. Booth asked is the annual report from January through December.

Mrs. Bursick answered yes.

**G) Tree Funding Reserve Close Out and Monthly (Sent as “Tree Fund Balance”)**

Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, reported that there were five (5) dedicatory trees currently being processed.

Mrs. Booth asked is Dig Gardens the preferred vendor.

Ms. Haynes answered yes. She explained that they usually give her the best price.

**H) Map of City Boundaries**  
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=d5075de84g46178c9c9e9c6b3ea712>

The Commission members reported that the link to the map of City boundaries did not work.

Ms. Flanigan said that she would get the link from the City’s GIS Department.

**I) Resolution 2020-37 Annual Beautification Award Program Available to Implement**

Mrs. Booth reported that when the previous Tree and Beautification Commission discussed restarting the Award Program the Environmental Learning Center offered to sponsor some gift cards toward residential and commercial property for a native plant landscaping award.

**J) Amended Ordinance of the Tree and Beautification Commission purpose Statement**

Mrs. Booth asked what was the outcome of the website brochure. She said that she did notice the list of Commission members had not been updated with the new Commission members.

Mrs. Bursick said that would be corrected.

Mrs. Booth said that she had a new tree image that she felt was more what they wanted to promote.

Mrs. Bursick asked Mrs. Booth to email her the image and she would get it changed on the website.

Mrs. Booth said the previous Tree and Beautification Commission worked with Ms. Haynes on revising the list of trees to include more native trees and to take out some of the invasive trees. She said the list has not been changed on the website.

Mrs. Bursick said they would get it changed on the website.

Mrs. Booth reported that the application for the 2021 Tree City U.S.A. Certification with expenditures was not on today's agenda, but it appeared to her that the expenditure showed three (3) times more money spent for new trees than any other activity. She questioned why.

Ms. Haynes said that is usually the trimming the Street Division does over the roadways to keep the 14-foot clearance.

Mrs. Booth asked does the City know the location of each tree located in the City limits.

Ms. Haynes answered no. She said one (1) of her goals has been to try to receive a grant from the Division of Forestry and to have someone come in to do a tree inventory. She reported that years ago the GIS Department did put each tree on a map so at one time it was captured, but it was not continued since it was originally done. She said that she would send the information to the City Clerk's office to be sent to the Commission members.

Mrs. Booth asked Ms. Haynes to share with the Commission members the last few trees they planted through mitigation funds.

Ms. Haynes reported that they just planted a Powder Puff Tree near Charles Park. She said that she does have a big wish list of trees that she wants to plant. She said that she used mitigation funds to plant an Oak Tree at Crestlawn Cemetery. She reported that they took out the Cherry Hedge that was in front of the Cemetery. She explained that it was very old and was overgrown with several different plants. They will be replacing it with a Podocarpus Hedge.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A) Introduction By Each Commission Member**

\*This item was heard at the beginning of today's meeting.

### **B) Review of Purpose of Commission**

Mrs. Booth felt that everyone was clear on the purpose of the Commission.

### **C) Goals for 2022**

Mrs. Booth reported that the goals for the Commission was part of the Annual Report (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said that she did notice that the goals of the Commission remained unchanged so she felt it was time for them to look them over to see if any changes needed to be made. She asked the Commission members to review the goals and they would discuss any changes at their next meeting.

### **D) Information From Other Commission Meetings**

Mrs. Booth said if possible, she would like each Commission member to attend one (1) other Commission/Board meeting on a regular basis for the next year so that if anything comes up that is related to tree protection, tree preservation, etc., they could respond. She said that she would like for them to be proactive on this. She felt that sometimes they were not up to date on what the City is doing. She asked the Commission members if this was something they would be interested in doing.

Mrs. Robinson said that she would like to see a list on when the other Commission/Boards meet.

Mrs. Booth asked the City Clerk to send the Commission members the list. She said they would discuss this at their next meeting.

### **E) Tree City USA Recertification Report**

This item was discussed earlier in today's meeting.

### **F) Review Tree Protection Ordinance Changes**

Mrs. Booth said to her knowledge there has not been any changes to the Tree Protection Ordinance in Chapter 72 of the Code.

Ms. Flanigan reported that Mr. Jeffries is currently working on the revisions to Chapter 72.

Mrs. Booth questioned so that is when the workshops would take place.

Ms. Flanigan thought that was correct. She noted that when this is discussed by the Planning and Zoning Board, those meetings would be important meetings for the Tree and Beautification members to attend. She said that she would notify the Commission members when those meetings are scheduled.

### **G) Nominating Florida Friendly Properties / Projects**

Mrs. Booth asked the Commission members if they had any ideas on how they would implement the Awards Program for the Florida friendly properties and projects.

Mrs. Robinson suggested that they do this in conjunction with the Beautification Weekend, which is normally held the second weekend of February.

Mrs. Booth referred to the signs that they put out for the Beautification Weekend. She questioned if they could change the signs to make them more educational. An example would be something like, *choose plants that conserve water* or *choose plants that attract wildlife*. She said that she did not know the cost of redoing the signs.

Mrs. Robinson said there are places where they could get signs inexpensively. She noted that the Garden Club had signs for a recent flower show and people couldn't read them because there was too much information so they need to be careful on what they put on their signs.

Mrs. Booth said if they do think this was a good idea, there might be a local artist who could design them so that they draw people's attention.

Mrs. Booth said if they are going to implement this program, they need to decide what kind of criteria they want. They also need to decide if they want to give a paper certificate award, a monetary award, etc.

Ms. Siplak suggested awarding them with a discount from a local native plant nursery.

Mrs. Booth said if they had one award specifically for native plant landscaping, they would probably appreciate a discount to a native plant nursery. She said it would depend on who would be willing to sponsor it, as well as what the Commission wants to promote.

Ms. Siplak suggested that they put this item on their next meeting agenda and in the meantime the Commission members could submit their ideas to the City Clerk's office.

Mrs. Bursick said years ago the City had a Mayor's Award where awards were given to residential and commercial areas. She said that she would provide the information to the Commission members.

Ms. Haynes said that the Florida Friendly website has criteria on what falls under Florida friendly plants. She reported that the previous Tree and Beautification Commission had a Champion Tree program.

Mrs. Bursick said that she would provide the information on both the Mayor's Award and the Champion Tree program to the Commission members.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A) MainStreet Plantings: Ms. Nelson to Speak with Mrs. Elaine Jones and Mrs. Sue Gromis, MainStreet Executive Director**

Ms. Nelson reported that she spoke with Mrs. Elaine Jones and Mrs. Sue Gromis of MainStreet and they said they would attend the next Tree and Beautification Commission meeting to discuss the potteries downtown.

Mrs. Booth said they used to come before the Commission quarterly to give updates on any projects that the Commission might want to participate in.

Ms. Haynes reported that when the basket program started MainStreet did give the Commission quarterly updates because the Commission initially paid for the baskets and soil so they wanted to get updates on their progress.

Ms. Nelson thought the main issue with the potteries was that they need volunteers.

Mrs. Booth said they might want to consider not doing things where volunteers would be needed to maintain what they plant because volunteers come and go.

Mrs. Robinson said as a Master Gardener and as a member of the Garden Club, there are very few members who want to garden so getting volunteers is difficult.

Ms. Haynes explained that the only reason the hanging baskets project went through was because MainStreet assured everyone that they would take care of them.

Ms. Siplak asked does the City ever hire subcontractors to do the work that City staff is unable to do. She asked could the City have a budget to pay a contractor to maintain the baskets.

Ms. Haynes said that was something that she could not answer.

Ms. Flanigan explained that would be something that would have to come from the City Council. She said the Commission could give a recommendation to the City Council.

Ms. Siplak said that she worked for another City that had a basket program and the Parks Department maintained them.

Ms. Flanigan said this issue has come up at several meetings so the City Council is aware of this and if the Commission has any advice or recommendations she was sure that the City Council would be glad to accept them. She noted that the Economic Development Zone Commission (EDZC) is also looking at this.

Ms. Linda Moore, former member of the EDZC, reported that they tried to use the TIFF fund to put in rain gardens, but were told that they could not use that funding for anything like that because it was not considered a permanent infrastructure. She suggested that they ask the businesses to see if they were willing to chip in to pay for someone to take care of the baskets. She thought there could be some younger volunteers, such as college students.

Ms. Nelson thought there were some non-profit organizations who would love to partake in this. She said that she would reach out to them, as well as reach out to the College.

Ms. Siplak said that she would look into the costs.

**B) Arbor Day April 29, 2022 / Slash Pine Tree**

Ms. Haynes reported that Dig Gardens donated a Slash Pine Tree for the Arbor Day planting.

Mrs. Booth and Ms. Siplak reported that they would not be available to attend the Arbor Day Tree planting.

**C) Add to Sunshine any Emails to Other Council or Commissions to City Clerk**

Mrs. Booth explained to the Commission members that if they have any emails to the City Council or any Commission members that they send a copy to the City Clerk's office.

Mrs. Bursick explained that any correspondence would need to go through the City Clerk's office. The City Clerk's office would then send it out to the Commission members.

**D) Planning Board Workshops**

This item was discussed earlier in today's meeting.

**7. TREASURY REPORT**

None

**8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Booth asked if they see something where they think a beautification project could take place, is that something they could bring to the Public Work's Department's attention.

Ms. Haynes explained that anything that needs to be upgraded or redone would be a matter of time and money.

Mrs. Booth asked is there a process where if a Commission member sees something would they bring it forward at a meeting to request that it be looked into.

Ms. Haynes answered yes.

Mrs. Booth said that she reviewed the most recent plans for the Three Corners project and it appeared that there would be a huge variety of trees planted. She asked if the City has any input if they could include native trees that are small, narrow, etc., and not necessarily Oak Trees.

Ms. Haynes said they were still in the early stages of the project and she was not sure if the City would have a lot of input on the types of trees if they were going to be taken care of by an outside entity.

## **9. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Robinson said that she has a friend who lives in central beach who sends her information every time a tree is cut down. She said that Mr. Jeffries mentioned that the City was working on incentivizing people to build around the trees.

Ms. Flanigan reported that a new Florida Law recently passed where there was a preemption so that local governments could not regulate tree removal on private property where the homeowner could show that it was a dangerous tree that needed to come down. There was a Bill that changed that Statute this year, but it has not yet been signed by the Governor. She said when the Bill is signed she would send a copy to the Commission members. She noted that this does tighten up the preemptions so the City would have a little more space to regulate trees on private property.

## **10. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) May 19, 2022**

The next Tree and Beautification Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

Mrs. Robinson reported that she would not be in attendance.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

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