

The Secretary read that Pursuant to Executive Proclamation 29 JBE 2021, this shall serve as certification that in light of the spread of COVID-19 the Mandeville Planning and Zoning Commission is meeting via videoconference on Tuesday, April 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. In compliance with La. R.S. 42:17.1. The matters included on this agenda are critical to the continuation of the business of the Commission and should not be delayed, and therefore, meet the requirements of La. R.S. 42:17.1(A)(2). Public comments were accepted prior to the meeting by email to ccasanova@cityofmandeville.com. The Commission Secretary shall read the e-mails into the record relating to items posted to the agenda. Public comments will also be accepted in real time by joining the conference and using the hand raise function in the Zoom app.

The secretary called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Scott Discon, Anne Marie Fargason, Will Afton, Eric McQuiston, and Lee Frederick

Absent: Karin Crosby, Leslie Marcello

Staff Present: Catherine Casanova, City Arborist, and Cara Bartholomew, Planning Director; Council Members Present: Skelly Kreller, Jill McGuire

Chairman Scott Discon called the meeting to order.

Mr. McQuiston motioned to adopt the minutes of March 1st, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

New Business:

1. Prioritize Projects for 2021/2022 Budget Year

Mr. Discon reviewed the list of projects starting with Pottery Hill first since there were residents on the call who had submitted their concerns via email. He said Bridget Jarvis would like to comment.

Bridget Jarvis, 1212 Monroe St. spoke during the meeting and said her letter should have been received by the Commission and she felt there was too much attention at this location, and we are going to break the integrity of this historic site. She said the corner is very narrow. She noted people are trailing in there with bikes, kayaks, and boats knocking greenery down and attracting some of the local pets that who sits across the bayou from Pottery Hill. Would be nice to spend the City's money elsewhere. If it is just cordoned off and leave the plaque on the outside that would be helpful. And restore some of the cypress trees that the boy scouts put out several years ago and that would help with the drainage and the restoration of the land there.

Pottery Hill

- Description –
 - Clear and mulch areas to reduce impacts from foot traffic in and around Pottery Hill area. Shred plants being removed or thinned, in order to mulch in place. Label trees and shrubs on site to serve as an education project.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Allows our community to see the historic site and understand the history of the site with the Indian tribes that used to make pottery at this location. Allows our residents to use this area as a canoe launch with a walkable path to the water. Shows which native species of plants grow in and around a waterway in Louisiana.
- Budget – \$5,000

The Secretary read the email from Tom and Bridget Jarvis into the record:

Dear Catherine,

With reference to recent telephone conversations with both Scott Discon and Jill McGuire and with the upcoming April 5 planning meeting by the Parks and Parkway commission, I would like to follow up with this letter expressing our concerns with any major improvements to historic Pottery Hill on the corner of Monroe Street and Colbert.

My wife and I have been residents of this particular area for some 30+ years and are very familiar with this corner. For several reasons, we believe that only minor changes should be done to this area. The corner itself is very narrow with deep drainage ditches to one side and the Bayou to the other. School buses and large trucks can barely negotiate the turn and to add any additional parked cars and congestion could lead to further and perhaps disastrous complications. (Photo 1). Foot traffic as people attempt to launch kayaks and other small boats, we believe, would further damage the integrity of this historic area. Any sort of picnicking or trash left behind by visitors could lead to the visitation of some of our more unruly neighbors, alligators, foraging the area. (Photo 2)

Several years ago, in an attempt to restore the area a single Boy Scout troop planted 40 Cypress saplings along the bayou's edge to help restore Pottery Hill to its authenticity. Unfortunately, these trees have been cleared and replaced with unsightly plastic chairs. (Photo 3)

We truly believe that the sign indicating the historic notation of that corner is quite enough to denote it's historic value to this area. We ask that the city would take a minimalist attitude by simply A chain bollard protective barrier and perhaps the restoration of some of the cypress saplings.

Please add my wife to the zoom meeting for April 5 and future Park and parkways meetings because of her interest in this committee (Baolarvis@gmail.com). Also, we would like this letter read and inserted into the minutes of this meeting. We are available to discuss this issue in further detail at any time.

Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Tom and Bridget Jarvis
1212 Monroe St.

Comments:

Mr. McQuiston suggested having Mr. & Mrs. Jarvis get together with Ms. Crosby and then vote on it at the next meeting.

Ms. Fargason suggested putting a sign like the Harbor Battle of Mandeville and keep the bollards with the chains instead of ropes.

Ms. Casanova commented that there is a historic plaque at the site.

Mr. McQuiston said there needs to be a list of recommendations and read into the record, then agree or disagree and add whatever will be needed to get this formalized rather than just throwing out suggestions.

Mr. Discon said it is not favorable for canoes and small boats to launch there. He recommends a rules sign that says "no boating or no picnicking" should be displayed. He said without a sign he does not think these activities will cease. He also mentioned no chairs, no fishing, no littering and no loitering might help if something like that is also put there.

Mr. Afton asked Ms. Casanova if it can be completely shut off to the public and to be prepared for the next meeting.

Ms. Casanova responded she will get with the Planning Director and see.

The Secretary read the email from Yvette and David Gross into the record:

Good Afternoon, Catherine.

I am writing in follow up to our telephone conversation a few weeks ago concerning the Pottery Hill site at the corner of Monroe and Colbert Streets. I would like to thank both you and Scott Discon, Chair of the Parks and Parkways Commission, for taking the time to discuss this matter with me.

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As you know, my husband, David, and I purchased the property directly adjacent to Pottery Hill, 1200 Monroe Street, roughly 18 months ago. Please include us on the invitation list to attend the April 5 Parks and Parkways Commission zoom meeting. Our email address is grossnola@yahoo.com. Additionally, I would respectfully request that this email be read into and made a part of the official record of the April 5, 2021 meeting.

In anticipation of the meeting, we would like to extend our thanks to the City for installing the bollards and the barrier rope at the entrance of the Pottery Hill site. As you can see from the attached photographs, the barrier rope is once again cut down. As we understand the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the budgetary issues and possible expenditures, may we suggest installing something a bit more permanent than a rope that someone seems determined to keep removing. We support the City's desire to maintain the pristine nature of the site and its decision to keep it in its natural state. We would vehemently oppose any effort to develop the site in any way and would discourage the building of any boardwalk or launch on the site. While we understand the desire to protect the roots of the large live oak on the site of the artifacts that Pottery Hill has been designated to protect, it would be our expressed desire to see the entire location allowed to return to its original and natural setting, including the pathway within the site. Unfortunately, there are numerous people who park their vehicles along Colbert Street to unload kayaks or canoes, carry them through the site and launch them into the Bayou. Others park along the street and trek picnic baskets, fishing poles, and other things onto the site, oftentimes leaving behind litter and ruined vegetation. Additionally, it encourages alligators onto the banks which, perhaps not everyone accessing the site expects, thus creating more of a hazard than simply the parking problem along the street. I have attached several photographs of the path and where it leads in to the bayou for reference. Additionally, I have attached a photograph of the live oak tree sporting several ropes that apparently someone has decided to leave on the tree.

To that end, it has come to our attention that a portion of the Pottery Hill site has been cleared which we feel detracts from the pristine nature of the site as intended by the City. There is a pile of brush on the site, a photograph of which is attached hereto as well. We would ask that any clearing be ceased and plantings installed to restore the entire site to its natural condition. We would encourage more decisive land use definition for the site to prohibit access, prohibit launching, prohibit development of any sort, and prohibit the removal of trees, bushes, and other vegetation from the site, thus returning it to its protected, natural condition.

In summary, as this meeting is to discuss potential Parks and Parkways projects and associated budget and expenditures, we would like to urge the Commission and the City to spend only that which is necessary to restore the Pottery Hill site to its former natural condition and to install a barrier more permanent and less likely to be removed than the rope currently uninstalled.

With kind regards,

Yvette and David Gross
1200 Monroe Street

Mr. McQuiston said to be sure Ms. Crosby gets both letters and photographs so that she can address this and make sure all of the concerns are addressed so this can be moved along at the next meeting and vote on this. He also asked what kind of enforcement options are there so people pay attention to this?

Mr. Discon responded that the City Police would be an option but did not think they would actually enforce this and that's why he thinks something should be posted.

Ms. Casanova said unless the person is actually caught in the act doing something, and without a video it cannot be proven. She suggested fencing off the property at Bayou Dr. and replant.

Mr. Discon said he would speak with Ms. Crosby and see about putting some kind of signage that notifies the public that this is a pedestrian only and no fishing would be allowed because right now it is a free for all.

Ms. Fargason said to just close it off entirely from public use and have a sign indicating this is a historic site where archeologists have found shards of pottery, and if you would like to see the pottery to go over to The Trailhead.

Mr. Discon said for the Commission to put together a plan and they will vote on it at the next meeting and said that Ms. Gross and Ms. Jarvis would be invited to come back. He reiterated there needs to be rules signage.

Sunset Point Pollinator Plantings

- Description –
 - New plantings of designated pollinator species will be planted in three beds in Sunset Point Park.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Improve the appearance of Sunset Point
 - Promote and educate citizens of the importance
 - Easy to install and maintain
 - Inexpensive enhancement with visual impact
- Budget – \$12,000

Cemetery

- Description –
 - Addition to the Cemetery by adding a new mausoleum, inground burial plots, cremation garden, drainage improvements, and landscape improvements.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Adds more space for burials. At this time the cemetery is full and no additional plots can be purchased.
 - Will help improve the drainage to further preserve the inground plots.
 - Help to make the site more accessible and to help bring in the public to the history of Mandeville and to discover the history of the site.
- Budget – \$75,000

Hwy 22 / N. Causeway Overpass & Underpass

- Description –
 - Have parish refrain from cutting grass in ditch and allow the drainage ditches to grow with natural wildlife; Have mural's painting under the Overpass (Lake) and columns painted (cypress trees); Landscape other 2 areas of overpass with "natural grasses", cypress trees & yellow wedelia.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Beautification of most major thoroughfare in town
 - Water garden already in place
 - Create and utilize water garden discussion
 - Relatively inexpensive/Cost effective design that could be easily implemented.
- Budget – \$40,000

Wildflower Conservation Area Longleaf Pine Savanna

- Description –
 - Our existing Wildflower Conservation Area represents a Longleaf Pine Savanna and is centrally located on the eastern side of Mandeville and is widely visible. It is a progressive reflection of appreciation to our unique community where the natural habitat is valued and in so doing strive to preserve the way of life. This approximate one-acre site supports native flora and grasses found in the rich pine savanna. The area greatly benefits flora and fauna and provides an excellent opportunity for enrichment and education of a sustainable ecosystem which was once found throughout St. Tammany for residents and visitors. Planning to take place this spring and implementation to begin thereafter.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Increase Biodiversity within by planting and re seeding species adapted to the pine savanna, thus creating more visible color and variety for viewing.
 - Establish Management Practices for necessary prescribed burns and remove invasive species.

- Design and Implement non-obtrusive natural walking paths for access to view, enjoy, and gain knowledge of plant species and make additional upgrades where needed.
- Provide Natural Signs for identification and information about Area and individual Flora along paths.
- Budget – \$30,000

New Flagpole Installation

- Description –
 - The placement of the USA Tree City Flag & Flagpole in 2 locations:
 - East side: Wildflower Garden
 - West side: W. Causeway landscape Median at HWY 22
- Benefit to the City –
 - High Visibility areas
 - Educational to Mandeville residents
 - Fly our flags
 - Relatively inexpensive/ Cost Effective design that could easily be implemented
 - This project was approved by mayor in 2017 with locations already mapped out by city of Mandeville. This project could be done in-house.
- Budget – \$59,000

Business Street Tree Plantings

- Description –
 - Continue with bi-yearly planting of trees in front yards of local businesses; Focus on Commercial street canopy; There needs to be better marketing efforts; Business to Business East side: Wildflower Garden
- Benefit to the City –
 - Replants Mandeville Business Corridor with Grade A trees
 - Beautify the City of Mandeville
 - Increase Business property values
- Budget – \$20,000

Marigny Avenue Edible Forest Phase 2

- Description –
 - Continuation of the project down Marigny Avenue along the medians.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Beautification for neighborhood and wildlife. Allows for residences nearby to see fruiting trees and native species and insects/ wildlife. May also serve as an educational area for nearby schools.
- Budget – \$10,000

Pollinator Planting at the Trailhead Along Trace

- Description –
 - Design and install a pollinator garden along the St. Tammany Trace (both North and South) between Carroll Street and Lafitte Street, just west of the Farmer's Market.
 - Submit the proposal to school board for art project and request if they would allow students to participate. Budget for 2021-22 would be around \$5,000 to install seeds and fencing for art board, and paint. Gather judges to review art and select pieces and artists for the installation on fence.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Benefit to the city by incorporating our children into an outdoor art project. Beautify the easement areas around the trace and create a visually aesthetic area in and around the commercial buildings near the trace trailhead and parking lots. Create an attractive and ecologically beneficial pollinator's garden.
- Budget – \$20,000

Wildflowers in Medians

- Description –
 - To plant red clover or other wildflowers on Causeway Blvd. from Lovers Lane north to I-12 to beautify this area. In the past years, various wildflowers bloomed in this area, but the maintenance contractors began cutting the grass before the flowers went to seed thus bringing on the demise of the wildflowers.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Causeway Blvd is the main throughfare into the City of Mandeville from both the North and the South. Seeding of the boulevard would beautify this important part of Mandeville. The flowers would support and attract pollinators. Also, the City would save on man hours mowing the median prior to cutting mid-summer. Lastly, this planting would put Mandeville in the company of a progressive group of wildflower promoters who maintain, preserve, and encourage wildflowers along rights of way, namely Texas and Alabama.
- Budget – No cost to the City

N. Causeway Service Road – East Side

- Description –
 - Remove all existing diseased crepe myrtles; Replace with a grove of pine trees and palmettos to mirror other side of highway but not to block store visibility; Add several oaks to accentuate.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Beautification of major service road thoroughfare in town; High Visibility area; What is there is dying and/or sad; Could be a major welcoming area to Mandeville; Replacing with natives only; Relatively inexpensive/ Cost Effective design that could be easily implemented.
- Budget – \$15,000

N. Causeway Service Road – West Side

- Description –
 - Plant a new buffer of pine trees and palmettos to mirror what is already existing.
- Benefit to the City –
 - Beautification of major service road thoroughfare in town. High visibility area. What is there is dying and/or sad. Could be a major welcoming area to Mandeville. Replacing with natives only. Relatively inexpensive / cost effective design that could be easily implemented.
- Budget – \$8,000

Tree Inventory

This item was added by Ms. Casanova. She said the last one was in 1997 and very outdated so there needed to be a new one.

- Description –
 - A full inventory of all trees located within the public owned spaces and ROWs and a level 1 assessment of all trees. 3-year subscription to a tree inventory software. Equipment needed to do the inventory – tablets, trimbles, etc...
- Benefit to the City –
 - An inventory of trees and planting spaces is a prerequisite in planning for and making sound management decisions including budget strategies and priorities. An inventory can provide the locations of trees that require pruning or removal to reduce risk, the number of trees located within the public right-of-way, the value of ecosystem services trees provide, and the number of available planting sites. In addition, an inventory can help to identify insect or disease problems or young trees that require irrigation, pruning, and other maintenance.

With this information, tree commissions can annually plan, prioritize, and budget tree removals, maintenance work, and plantings. They can also determine the value of their community's trees for increasing property values and stormwater management which helps emphasize a tree program's importance to community leaders. Over the years, changes in a community forest can be seen in the number, age, and species of trees. A well maintained inventory can be used in cases of liability to demonstrate there was no negligence in the inspection or care of public trees. An inventory will also improve the chances of receiving grants and other assistance by documenting the condition of and care for the community forest.

- Budget – \$250,000

Mr. Discon said next month's meeting will be discussing the prioritization and asked that everyone prioritize their projects prior to the meeting.

Comments:

Dr. Kreller said the tree inventory is important and said they have no idea how many trees the City has so there needs to be a tree inventory. He said one has not been done in a long time and it is very important and needed to find out if there are any real problems with them as in a risk tree assessment. It has not been done since 1995-1997 and is supposed to be done every 5 years. He also said there are grants for this from Baton Rouge Green, and that funding will be lost if it is not done.

Dr. Kreller said he would be honored to make a resolution to the City Council for Pottery Hill. He thinks that stainless steel posts would help keep people out. The cypress seedlings project is designed to help the City and was created by an Eagle Scout Troop. He said the City should have the paperwork somewhere and suggested it could be done again by that troop at no cost.

Dr. Kreller commented about the cemetery and thinks \$75k is too low. Ms. Casanova said the mausoleums are separate and not part of the \$75k. This is just for cremation garden area.

Staff Update:

Mr. Discon asked when they are planning the final block of Marigny.

Ms. Casanova said in the next week or so, she had to pull them off of the street trees.

Dr. Kreller commented on what the DOTD decision is concerning Magnolia. Ms. Casanova said there are 47 magnolia trees next to the Neighborhood Walmart and asked the DOTD if they can be moved. The DOTD informed the City that they cannot be moved because it was part of a federal grant.

Ms. Fargason moved to open the agenda to discuss the removal of the dead palm tree under the overpass at the location of Monroe St. and up along the roadway to West Causeway Approach, Ms. Frederick seconded, all were in favor.

Ms. Fargason said it's been pushed off for many months and said the tree is dead.

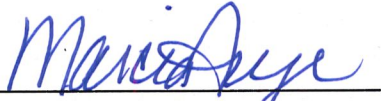
Mr. McQuiston motioned to put money in the budget to have the tree assessed to see if it would survive a transplanting to be moved, and said to move it to Sunset Point, Mr. Afton seconded, and all were in favor.

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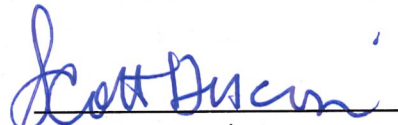
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Ms. Fargason motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:41p.m., seconded by Mr. McQuiston and was unanimously approved.



Marcia Frye, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman
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