

## **Parks and Parkways Commission September 10, 2018**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Discon and the secretary called roll.

Present: Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Anne Marie Fargason, Eric McQuiston, Marilyn Osborne and Nancy Clark

Absent: Karin Crosby

Also Present: Louise Scott, Planning Director and Catherine Casanova, Landscape Inspector

### *Minutes*

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of July 2 and August 6, 2018, seconded by Mr. McQuiston and was unanimously approved. 8/6

### *Opening of the Agenda:*

Ms. Clark moved to open the agenda to discuss the West Beach Parkway median and the Galvez Street Live Oak tree, seconded by Ms. Osborne and was unanimously approved.

### *New Business:*

#### *Oak Tree Signage*

Ms. Clark presented that Mr. Adamiak has proposed a heavy duty plastic plaque which should last as long as metal. She suggested engraving the name, circa year and approximate age of each tree. Ms. Casanova said the age would change every year so the Commission agreed to just engrave the name and circa year. The plaque would be attached to a cedar wood stake installed in 1' of concrete to prevent it from being pulled out of the ground. Mr. Adamiak had said he would meet with Ms. Casanova to determine the placement in the mulch. There were 30 trees at a cost of \$600 with 10 plaques being installed per week. The brass tag with the tree number would also be located on the sign. Mr. Adamiak had also volunteered to create school worksheets for information.

Ms. Fargason was concerned that cedar wood was soft, but it would last the longest. Ms. Frederick was concerned about its height but there would be a depth of mulching. Ms. Osborne was concerned about vandals. Mr. Discon met with Mr. Adamiak and suggested for the price it was worth moving forward. Similar signage in New Orleans would cost \$100 per tree. The markers in Madisonville were not taken by vandals. Since the plaque was placed in concrete, it would be harder to remove. Ms. Frederick asked about the price difference using aluminum and it was stated that it would be a difference of \$12 per sign. In reviewing the sample, Mr. Discon said the plaque must be the same size as the wood. It was agreed to increase the size of the wood to either 4x6 or 6x6. Ms. Clark said suggest using 4x6 posts with an aluminum sign stating the name and circa year. Ms. Frederick reiterated that the signage as being placed only on the registered trees. Ms. Casanova said Zeigler Trees had an air spade instead of digging the posts. She would coordinate with Mr. Adamiak. The commission was in consensus with the signage.

#### *Updates on Florida Street Streetscape plantings*

It was agreed to proceed with the solicitation of additional trees moving west to Chenier and the Post Office. Ms. Osborne said she would contact the owners of the Village Shopping Center. Ms. Scott said she would follow up with the Post Office. Ms. Casanova said Mr. Brumfield would check the planted trees in the fall for replacement.

*Update on Marigny Avenue Edible Forest*

Mr. McQuiston said he had designed a plan for the first three blocks from Florida Street that had stayed true to the original proposal of planting; however, he had incorporated some material changes because of availability. The fruit trees were available in 5 gallon pots, and he felt it was better to plant a smaller size. Mr. McQuiston had also included mayhaw trees, and changed blackberries to raspberries. They were vining so there should be a trellis or arbor. The commission suggested trying fencing for the vines. It was discussed to install a 4 x 4 pot with aircraft cable that could be zig zagged so it could be detached on one end. Cleco would the trees on only these three blocks. The end block anchor live oak trees would be included in this planting. Mr. McQuiston said he would email the plan to the commission and he had priced it at Bracy's for information.

Mr. Discon moved to approve the plan, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved. The plan would include 4-6 fig trees on each block. The plan did not include mow strips, but they could be added. It would be better to do pit planting to keep the mowers away from the planting and mulched 3' from the tree trunk to keep the weeds away. It was suggested to amend the soil with 50% coarse sand. The path was not included at this time.

*Fall Educational Program*

Potential topics discussed were Living with Water ideas that Dana Brown might present, stormwater management in your own yard, rain barrels and swales. The Master Gardeners Association of New Orleans and the Pollinator event at the AG Center could be useful for obtaining speakers.

*Tyler Thomas Park*

Ms. Frederick said she received a letter from Pastor James Winston endorsing the planting in the Tyler Thomas Park. He had also spoken with Mayor Villere. Ms. Clark said the park was the former site of the Rosenwald School and suggested installing a historic plaque. Ms. Scott said the City could order the plantings when ordering the Marigny Avenue trees and plants. Ms. Scott said Lucious Brumfield would do the planting.

*Discussion of additional tree species protection*

Ms. Scott said she read the Metairie Garden Club regulations and they protected all trees 8" or greater, and named all species within the setbacks. The regulations were any 50% of trees 3" or greater in the setbacks and stated the minimum number in the setbacks. It did not protect additional species outside of the setback. With the recent cypress tree removal that set of regulations would not provide protection outside of the front yard setback. It was her understanding that the commission's intent was to further protect other species like magnolia and cypress trees. Ms. Clark said she would like to protect all of the native trees with a stated size. Mr. Discon asked about tree preservation with pool construction. Ms. Scott said the Metairie Garden Club's accessory structures regulations had no teeth. She agreed that protecting certain species was a good idea.

Ms. Scott said the staff would draft language and distribute it for review. Ms. Osborne asked if protected trees were removed would there be additional replanting. Ms. Scott said it depended on the proposed ordinance language. As an example, all cypress trees greater than 8" were protected but if there was a hardship there could be an appeal to the Zoning commission. Mr. Discon asked if there was a structure or pool addition would that be sufficient reason to remove the tree. Ms. Scott said the draft language could include in the areas of proposed construction, if not then the homeowner could not build a pool. The Metairie Garden



Club regulations contained language to work around it. Even if there was no viable option, the homeowner could still require Zoning Commission approval.

Ms. Frederick said with the Carroll Street project it could have been worked out in the language that big construction must work around the trees and plan the building location to save the trees. Ms. Scott said there were establish setbacks and interior requirements for multifamily zoning, but the developer was allowed to clear areas proposed for the buildings. The existing language was for live oak trees. Ms. Frederick said she wanted the builders to rearrange their buildings. Mr. McQuiston said the commission could not expect to save every tree. Ms. Scott provided an example of a proposed building addition with no other viable options would allow the removal, but if there was a way to shift the addition the staff would work with the homeowner. Ms. Frederick said she was mostly concerned with new construction. Mr. Discon said there could be different language for new construction and renovation. Ms. Frederick said the Carroll/Coffee Streets apartment development removed most of the trees that she felt could have been saved. Ms. Osborne said she understood the density of the replanting of live oak trees, but would like to include other native species to replant. Ms. Frederick said a homeowner could not replant an older tree. Ms. Clark said after construction even with preserving the site would still have a chance of losing the tree.

Becky Rohrbough, 2525 Lakeshore Drive, said she liked a regulation distinction of developed and undeveloped sites. They had planted several cypress trees and later realized it was not the best idea since they were aggressive trees. Ms. Casanova said all tree roots extended two to three times their size. Ms. Clark said cypress trees did not land on houses and had great water uptake. Mr. McQuiston said if the tree needed to be removed, a case could be made that it was harming the house and the pipes.

#### *Opening of the Agenda:*

#### *West Beach Parkway median*

Ms. Scott had received a report from Dr. Malcolm Guidry. She said when they met on site in the last week there questions about the soil depth around one of the trees and Dr. Guidry was in agreement. However, because the soil type was silty and sandy lome there was not much that could be done at this time. There was money in the budget for a landscape plan and the staff proposed to move forward on that plan quickly and to keep it simple. The plan would be to re-establish the swale, especially on the west side and suggested planting irises the entire way. It was her understanding that the residents wanted simple planting and to clean it up. Ms. Clark said there were sunny spots that would accommodate clustered Natchez crepe myrtles. Heavy mulching was needed on the existing trees and establishing curb cuts for water into the swales instead of the yards. It was suggested that Lesley Patterson (neighbor), Nancy Clark, and Anne Marie Fargason would head up the plan. Ms. Scott said she would contact Ms. Patterson. Mr. Discon said the goal was to implement a plan in the fall with Mr. Brumfield doing the planting. He could work into the remediation. Ms. Fargason said she was concerned since there was mud over the curbing. Ms. Scott said it would be removed and the City would have to figure out the curb cuts.

Ms. Scott said she had been back to the site since the date of the memo, recognized some areas were deeper than the report. Ms. Fargason said some of the soil material was clay. Ms. Scott said samples were taken and over the next several months it would be fine. Ms. Frederick asked how many trees were involved and it was answered there were eight trees. Ms. Clark said heavy mulching would keep down the grass and make maintenance easier.

Mr. Discon suggested the neighbors do maintenance with blowers. Ms. Rohrbough asked how the soil would be removed. Ms. Scott said the landscape contractor would do it by

hand. Ms. Frederick asked how to create better communication. Ms. Scott said there would be better internal communication.

*Galvez Street oak*

Ms. Scott said the City was negotiating with the contractor. The City Council was made aware of the situation and at the time was not interested in spending \$171,000. Since that time there have been reconsiderations before decisions. Ms. Clark asked if was part of the bid process. Ms. Scott said it was a change order and that was what council said they did not want to spend the money. Mr. Discon said the intent was to save the tree and the limb. Ms. Scott said there was a desire to save everything, and the Mayor was working to revisit the contract. The staff had met on site with the contractor a few months ago. At that time, it was agreed to work around the tree. Mr. Discon was excited that the tree was not just cut and there was discussion. Ms. Rohrbough asked how they would work around the tree. Ms. Scott said the discussion was to work on the other side of the ditch. She suggested the commission discuss it at the City Council meeting.

*Staff Update*

- Hermitage on the Lake fence – the old strip of bamboo would be removed and it was proposed that the City would coordinate with the subdivision to replant the area.
- Ms. Frederick asked how to access the money for the butterfly garden at the Kierr Garden.
- Ms. Clark said the East Causeway crepe myrtles had sooty mold and the plantings were under contract. Mr. Discon said the trees were mulched and the bottoms cut back. Ms. Casanova said the contract was to maintain the sucker growth.
- Ms. Frederick said she would like to see oleander planted. Ms. Scott suggested planting them on Monroe Street. Ms. Clark said the project Carroll/Monroe Street project had skimmed the ground and made a mess. Mr. Discon said the contractor should be responsible for remediation. Mr. McQuiston said some municipalities required fencing and had language that any recorded violation of the fencing was a monetary penalty. Ms. Frederick said fining was a way to protect trees on new construction.
- Ms. Fargason said the Wilkinson/Monroe Street construction appeared to have broken rules. Ms. Scott said they did follow the rules.

Ms. Clark moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Fargason and was unanimously approved.

  
Lori Spranley, Secretary

  
Scott Discon, Chairman  
Parks and Parkways Commission