

Parks and Parkways Commission April 3, 2017

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

Present: Nancy Clark, Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Anne Marie Fargason, Maggie Gleason and Richard Adamiak

Absent: Karin Lorenz Crosby

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

Adoption of the Minutes

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of March 6, 2017, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

The periphery greenbelt ordinance would be introduced at April 13th City Council meeting and would be placed on the Planning and Zoning Commission's meeting for a recommendation.

Election of Chairman/Vice Chairman

Ms. Frederick moved to nominate Scott Discon as Chairman, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved.

Ms. Clark moved to nominate Ms. Frederick as Vice Chairwoman, seconded by Ms. Fargason and was unanimously approved.

New Business:

1. Discussion with Gail Camus regarding live oak tree registry

Gail Camus introduced Jean Thibodaux who had registered her live oak tree and had discussed the opportunity to register all of the oaks in the subdivision with the President of the Beau Chene Subdivision Garden Club. Ms. Camus took over the project and said it was one of the most gratifying projects she had done knowing that you were bringing attention to such an asset as the live oak trees. The Live Oak Society had 8,000 trees that could live to be 1,500 years old. There were 200 registered live oak trees in City Park, and 178 trees in Beau Chene. She thought on the lakefront and in Old Mandeville there must be more oak trees than City Park. She had asked Peggy May, Keep Mandeville Beautiful, if the City had ever registered the live oak trees and she referred Ms. Camus to the Parks and Parkways Commission. She was glad to receive the telephone that the commission was interested in registering the live oak trees. They had divided volunteers into teams of two. They had designed a registration form that could be left if no one was home. Someone had built a pole made out of PVC pipe using soft rope with a measurement at 4.5' tall and at least 8' in circumference. At the 8' piece there was a knot and another knot every 6" to determine the tree measurement. There were several trees that measured 120'. Many volunteers filled out the form and the homeowners named the trees. Beau Chene decided to order bronze plaques to be put in the ground to identify the tree. At one point they tied blue ribbons around all of the registered trees. Another project came out of a visit to Fairview State Park. They were now measuring and registering their oaks. One of their members had seen a live oak tree by Northlake Christian School and she contacted the owners who had the tree registered with a big celebration. The tree registry was a wonderful project and it was a sense of pride for the tree owners.

Ms. Clark said by naming the trees, people become aware that the tree was an asset. Ms. Camus said it enhanced the value of the property. One of the homeowners had seen a property with four trees and when it became for sale the second time he purchased the property saying he bought the trees and the house came with it. She suggested registering the lakefront trees with an announcement in a newspaper article. She was sure the Beau Chene volunteers would help with Mandeville's registration. Beau Chene would love to be the sponsor.

Ms. Clark said several years ago there were several private properties named their trees. A mapping project was started, but it was not finished. It was fun to see people get interested in the project. She agreed beginning with the public trees was a good place to start. The Parks and Parkways Commission would take on the project and Ms. Fargason would love to have Beau Chene sponsor and help. The commission could also make a call for volunteers. The commission requested to borrow the measurement pole. Ms. Scott suggested asking a Boy Scout troop to participate. Ms. Camus said measuring the trees could be one of their community service projects. Mr. Adamiak asked if the information went into a national database. Ms. Camus said yes, it was listed on the Live Oak Society website and was listed by the thousands. There were pictures of each of the trees with the name of the owner, size and name of the tree. Colleen Landry was the only live person listed on the Society. The largest tree was listed as the president and it was currently the Seven Sisters Oak in Mandeville. Some trees had died and some were removed to make way for highways. Two years ago Southwestern University wanted to build a building, but they were convinced by the Society to locate somewhere else.

Ms. Frederick said Ms. Clark's project was called the Live Oak Legacy. She suggested naming the grove with a plaque instead of a plaque being placed at every tree. Ms. Camus said the commission may want to do a different recognition. Ms. Clark said Madisonville placed a small ground granite plaque and that material would survive on the lakefront. Ms. Camus said Sacred Heart Church in Lacombe had people adopt the trees with granite memorial markers. Ms. Frederick said before she retired from Madisonville Junior High School, she and her Science Club registered and named the three trees with granite plaques.

Ms. Fargason asked if Ms. Camus knew of the parish regulations. Ms. Camus said she was not sure, but their Home Owners Association required any trees with the exception of pine trees to be documented. Ms. Scott said on a recent variance application, the applicant sent the Parish regulations on live oak trees and the provision allowed removal if the tree limited access to the property. The Parish regulations were more flexible. Ms. Camus felt if we preserved our trees and our historical sites, it would make the community more marketable. It would show you cared about your community.

2. Discussion with Art Council New Orleans, Sculpture Garden and Landscaping

Ms. Scott presented that the staff had met with the Art Council on site and asked them to make a brief presentation and present a more in depth proposal at the next meeting.

Alphonse Smith, Associate Director Places and Design for the Art Council of New Orleans, presented their believe as an Art Council that art transformed communities. They would have three interpretations: inspire and connect/transform place/invest in artists. His department was involved in the creative intervention of public art. Context of the presentation was that the Art Council was looking at civic design considerations. He had the opportunity to work with a great team of architects, designers, and planners with the City of New Orleans, Planning Commission, City Council as well as the artists in the region to create interventions in public space. The funding was provided by the Percent for Art Program which was established in 1986. There were over 350 Percent for Art artworks. His team worked with numerous entities to create an amazing artwork from mirror installations to murals. There were ten murals in Fat City for their revitalization. There were innovative sculptures of water and ecology with one piece named Turning which was inspired by prayer wheels. The engraving on the metal structures reflected different moments in time of the Mississippi River and was lit up at night with different intensities when turned. Public art was a civic strategy and 16' sculptures were designed to identify the evacuation locations in case of hurricanes. There was writing on the arm of the sculptures.

There were creative pavilions that could hide an eyesore between a beautifully redone greenway and was to educate the public about water levels in the Louisiana region. At

night, the pavilion lit up with different intensities of blue color. The pavilion hid the water pumping station.

Mr. Smith presented slides of a current project at Claiborne and Treme Streets as part of the Claiborne Innovation District. They were engaging the communities to what they wanted in a public space. They were working with the Office of Resilience in New Orleans to use creative strategies to compliment several different projects. They were approached by the City for creative approaches to community engagement and for a master plan for public art.

They worked with the youth in the design building process to learn trade skills with a creative arts component. The hope was that the young people would be a part of the future leaders who would look at the City in a way that was valuable and give a sense of taking care of your city. He presented pictures of the Lunafet that was a demonstration of what you think of public art with light and how to think of light to beautify a space. There were many spaces that were not well lit spaces and they worked with artists and the community on what it would look like to light up public spaces.

Underpass Art Possibilities – Mr. Smith said he liked that the City was looking at water and ecological sentiment of where Mandeville was located. It was good to be environmentally specific for the placement of the public art. There would be a planning process and the steps would be a site analysis, creative identification session or a review if there was an existing plan, funding sources, and permissions and permits that would be necessary. The second phase was a request for proposal on developing the community engagement strategy. Then there would be the fabrication and installation. The last phase would be how to activate the sculptures and maintain it over time.

Ms. Frederick asked if their group had incorporated landscaping into the sculpture areas and how to arrive at that. Mr. Smith said the Turning sculpture was public art complementing landscape along the Jean Lafitte Greenway. If the City had a plan they would determine how to fit the sculptures into the plan or if there was a blank slate when there was a call for artists that the landscape consideration was part of the call itself. Ms. Frederick asked if it was possible to landscape the area with the bones and then install the art to get the project going. Mr. Smith said the best approach would to work together from the start. It would be harder to devise public art if another plan was already installed. Ms. Frederick asked with leaving space for the sculptures, would it still be better to do all of the project at one time. Ms. Clark said that would be limiting the opportunities. Ms. Scott suggested the project should be a unified plan. Mr. Smith said it was a great idea to have the plan in place front to back as the ultimate plan. It would give the best possibility for the dynamic of a connected project.

Mr. Adamiak asked how to value the art piece. Mr. Smith said the City would decide on a budget amount. City government artists would work within the set budget, but that limited the pool of designers and artists. The best way to look at it was to look at precedent of what was wanted and get a rough estimate of the cost. The Art Council had information to evaluate the cost. He suggested that the plan should parallel the public art plan from the beginning.

Mr. Discon said he asked about David Waggoner helping coordinate the project as a Landscape Architect. Mr. Smith stated that Turning and Data Field were both Living With Water pieces. Ms. Scott said the Art Council could assist the City in starting the process and preparing an RFP. Mr. Discon asked if the process would be to contract with the Art Council and pay for their services. Ms. Gleason asked if the Art Council was a non-profit. Mr. Smith said the Art Council was a 501c3 non-profit. They provided a private/public partnership with the City of New Orleans, but they also worked with other people. Mr. Smith said there were Percent for Art artists all over the world and Mandeville would be a wonderful place for that program. Ms. Clark said the City needed to determine with expertise how to turn the dominant feature under the underpass into a celebration of the

relationship with water. Mr. Smith said it was rare to have that type of space. Ms. Frederick agreed it was a wonderful opportunity. Mr. Smith said both day and night it could be an amazing spot to gather.

Mr. Smith said the next step would be to coordinate with his team and meet with the staff to begin the planning process. Ms. Scott said there were funds in the budget for a contract with the Mayor or City Council approval of the proposal. Ms. Gleason asked if the initial proposal was for the design services. Ms. Scott said it would be for the planning process and would require a Scope of Work. Ms. Frederick said the project should be in phases to provide the funds from this and future budgets. Ms. Scott said once the plan was developed, it would not be implemented all at one time but would need a plan for the budget. That could only happen with a scope of work. She suggested a Master Art Plan for the whole City. Ms. Gleason suggested the wildflower meadow would be a great location for art. It was suggested to add this in the Short Term Work Program and it would make the City Council more familiar with the project.

Ms. Frederick wanted to focus on the underpass and get it done. Mr. Smith said starting with the underpass would be substantial and think about other places for 3-5 years out.

Opening of the Agenda:

1. Hammocks on the lakefront

Ms. Clark moved to open the agenda for a discussion of hammocks on the lakefront, seconded by Ms. Fargason and was unanimously approved.

Dr. Malcolm Guidry stated he was on the LSU Baton Rouge campus the previous Wednesday which had 1,000 live oak trees. There was a live oak tree grove located by the Greek Theater. He presented a picture of coeds on hammocks secured to live oak trees with nylon straps. Dr. Guidry had asked Dr. Felner if there was a school policy regarding hammocks and he said the hammocks were not hurting the trees using the nylon straps.

Ms. Clark said the concern was that not everyone was using nylon straps, and many people were screwing an anchor into the tree. She asked how to educate the public or would it take police enforcement. Dr. Guidry suggested using a dog lease around the tree in a loop that could be adjusted so there would be no harm to the tree. Ms. Clark agreed that would be great, but there were limbs that were not strong. Mr. Discon was concerned about people using the cypress trees by the bridge. He also saw people attaching to the live oak tree limbs instead of the trunks. He suggested some type of rule that only certain sections of the live oak trees could be used for hammocks and a prohibition against any of the trees that the City wanted to name.

Dr. Guidry agreed that no type of anchor should be driven into a tree. A chain with a loop and hook would not work. Ms. Gleason suggested distributing a public service announcement. Mr. Adamiak said he had noticed abuses the past weekend and had researched what other cities were doing to curb this problem. With the continued use on the same trees, it would eventually damage the bark. Ms. Frederick said people were creatures of habit. Dr. Guidry said it was difficult to police, and the police would have to make repeated rounds. Ms. Clark said if the public hung the hammocks on the trunks using the nylon straps it would not be an issue. Ms. Scott said the staff could discuss the issue with the police so they could talk to the people about using nylon straps or remove the hammock. Ms. Gleason said there was a public tree ordinance that prohibited nailing a sign so it would be the same that they could not nail a hammock. Ms. Scott said she would review the regulations and suggested issuing a warning the first time. Ms. Frederick said the problem was catching the people. Mr. Discon said hanging on the branches was the concern. Ms. Scott said the ordinance could be referenced with the creation of guidelines. Mr. Discon agreed there should be more specific rules. Ms. Frederick asked what size nylon rope should be used. There was a discussion that the ordinance stated rope or strap

and should the ordinance be revised to remove "rope". Ms. Scott said the City could enforce the existing regulations without an amendment. There was a discussion of enforcement being a warning and then a fine and there was existing language regarding violations.

Mr. Adamiak moved to develop language to amend Section 9.2.4.4, Protection of Public Trees. Ms. Casanova said in number 1(c) the City could use "fixture" loosely to allow the installation of Christmas lights in the trees. Fixture could be determined as something permanent. Mr. Discon said a fixture was something put in and became a part of. Dr. Guidry suggested requiring a double wrap of the strap. It was also discussed that the big live oak trees had no other trees to hang from. Ms. Scott said there could be police enforcement. Ms. Clark agreed there should be written guidelines. The motion was seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

3. Florida Streetscape Program – Scope of Work

Ms. Scott stated that Edward Deano, City Attorney, had been sent a copy of the contract which should be included on the April meeting agenda. The Scope of Work required City Council approval. Mr. Discon requested including a two year watering contract to get the tree established since some people would not water the trees. Ms. Scott said as part of the City planting program, it should include a maintenance plan and the soil remediation. In her discussions with Mr. Deano, the question was whether the City could plant on private property and it was determined it was part of the greater good and it could include a maintenance program. Ms. Fargason asked about the cost of a water truck and Ms. Scott said it would be better to pay for the maintenance. There would have to be someone to operate the truck.

4. East and West Causeway Approaches Tree Installation

Ms. Casanova said the bids were sent on March 27, 2017 and were due Friday. Ms. Gleason said there was an install by date and when the contractor received the Notice to Proceed they must begin within seven days. The planting would be started by the next meeting. There was a two growing season maintenance contract included in the bid.

Ms. Fargason asked if the palm tree located under the Causeway overpass could be moved to another location with more space. Ms. Casanova said full sun would shock the plant and it should remain in a shady area. It was suggested to move it in the landscaping area with the sculpture garden. Another location would be determined before the sculpture garden. Mr. Discon asked to mulch all of the Causeway overpass columns and leave the existing landscaping alone. Ms. Casanova would order mulch on Mr. Dufrechou's approval.

5. Update on Marigny Avenue Fruit trees, signs and design drawing

This was deferred until the next meeting.

6. Beautification project along North Causeway

This was deferred until the next meeting.

7. Rose Garden on lakefront – role of the sponsorship

Mr. Deano was reviewing the contract. Ms. Scott said he would meet with Keep Mandeville Beautiful after he was provided more information on the project.

Staff Update

- Brick at the lakefront fountain would be repaired tomorrow.

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- The gazebo would be repainted when there was dry weather.
- Oak tree at Marigny Avenue – the new bollard was installed.
- Pottery Oak would be the same rope as at Woodlake Elementary School.
- Christmas lights – the Public Works Department did not have any additional lighting and Ms. Casanova was researching what type of lighting was available.
- Cemetery – the staff met with Johnny Mayronne about additional landscaping. The staff was waiting for a Scope of Work and a contract. It would include the bamboo removal. This would be approved by the City Council.
- Mulch was installed at the lakefront and it looked good.
- There were 147 Street Trees installed since December, and there were 42 more applications.
- Ms. Frederick reminded Ms. Casanova about ordering hollies for Weldon Park Subdivision.
- Caladium Bulbs – the company used last year had stock availability. Caladium World was out of the Aaron and Carolyn Wharton species. The Caladium Bulb Company was out of Aaron in the number 1 with a drought in Florida this year. It was decided to order from the first company. The commission decided to sell on either April 29th or May 6th.

- Public Works Department – the dip on Monroe Street was on the list to be fixed.
- Ms. Frederick asked to plant a tree on the “u” on the sidewalk on Monroe and Massena Streets. There was a concern about power lines and it was suggested to plant a few crepe myrtle trees.

Mr. Adamiak said the Bunny Trail bridge would be constructed the week of the meeting. Ms. Casanova said Public Works Department would pick up stepping stones and have them installed. Mr. Adamiak asked to call him to meet the workers.

Mr. Discon asked about the concrete benches on the lakefront. Ms. Scott said Mr. DeGeneres stated they would be getting back on the project. Mr. Discon said there was no place to sit by the playground.

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