

**Parks and Parkways Commission**

**January 9, 2023**

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Chairman Scott Discon called the meeting to order at 6:08pm

The secretary called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Will Afton, Brien Croff, and Shelley Winstead (absent at roll call, present at 6:10)

Absent: Anne Marie Fargason, Christy Kervin

Staff Present: Catherine Fuselier, City Arborist; Alex Weiner, Secretary

**Minutes**

Mr. Afton made a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 5 meeting, Mr. Croff seconded, and all were in favor.

**New Business:**

**Election of Chair**

Ms. Frederick made a motion to nominate Mr. Discon to continue to serve as Chair as he has done a great job. Mr. Croff seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Discon made a motion to nominate Mr. Afton for Vice Chair. Ms. Winstead seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Spring Education Event Update**

Ms. Winstead said that there was no update from her now, she reminded everyone that the date of the event is April 29<sup>th</sup>, with a rain date of May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Frederick said that she has been working on gathering vendors and has a lot of names on her list including two native nurseries, Beavers Abundance out of Baton Rouge and Chickadee Natives out of New Orleans. She also brought up how Minnesota is giving tax breaks for people who are removing their lawns and putting in native and bee friendly plants.

She said that Barry Pierce is coming, and that Rue from the Northlake Nature Center wants to come. Linda, the NOLA Bug Lady is interested in coming and said that she could be a speaker or just do a table. Ms. Frederick said that she would speak on pollinators and butterflies if they needed another speaker.

Ms. Frederick said that a friend of hers who builds bluebird houses is coming, along with Jeff Hershaw the beekeeper from St. Josephs Abbey. Mr. Discon asked if he was a monk, Ms. Frederick said no, he was just a beekeeper.

Ms. Frederick said that she spoke with the Northlake Children's Museum operations officer, Christy Myer, and they would be coming and would have a table. She also said a composting person would be coming,

Ms. Frederick said the speakers are going to be Patty Zebrick with Wild Ones, Will Afton, Jeff Hershaw, and possibly Linda.

Ms. Fuselier said she spoke with Alia at the trailhead, and she is ok with having speakers both inside and outside. If they are speaking outside there is not a projector so they would have to bring their own equipment. She said that the amphitheater to the knoll is reserved for the event so they will be in the center of the market. Ms. Frederick said it was good to have the venue be inside and outside.

Mr. Discon asked if they would be outside the auditorium, Ms. Fuselier said they would be.

Ms. Fuselier said that there could be more than three speakers, Mr. Discon said they should add the NOLA Bug Lady.

Ms. Winstead asked what the time would be for the event, Ms. Fuselier said it would be from 9:00am – 1:00pm, which is when the trailhead market is open. The seedling giveaway would be for the same time.

Mr. Afton asked if there would be access to tables, Ms. Fuselier replied there would be. She asked for the amount needed beforehand so that Public Works could bring over more if the trailhead did not have enough.

Mr. Discon asked about branding, if there would be any shirts or signage. Mr. Afton said they could make a banner, Ms. Fuselier replied that the City has accounts to make banners.

Mr. Afton said that they should have a name for the event, Ms. Frederick said she would think of something. Ms. Fuselier mentioned that the national event is Pollination Celebration.

Ms. Frederick suggested connecting the name with Mandeville, Mr. Afton suggested “City of Mandeville Parks and Parkways Pollinator Celebration”.

Mr. Discon said it would be nice to have shirts for the event. Ms. Frederick said that she still had her green shirt that she got a while back, Mr. Discon said that they could recreate the shirt and use that.

#### **Mother’s Day Caladium Bulb Sale**

Ms. Fuselier said they need to confirm the date and if they want to use the same color caladiums as last year.

Mr. Discon said that the one subbed for the Aaron caladium was not great. Ms. Fuselier said they try for Aarons each time.

Mr. Afton said that caladiums are a shade loving plant so he suggested looking for a variety that can take some sun.

Ms. Fuselier asked how much they would like to order. Ms. Frederick asked if the amount that was ordered last year worked and if they were able to get rid of them all, Ms. Fuselier said they did.

Mr. Discon asked if there was a rain day last year where they were given out again, Ms. Fuselier replied that she did not believe so but what did happen one year was they were brought to the Mother’s Day parade at the Lang House.

Mr. Discon said they should stick with the same number as last year.

Ms. Frederick asked if they were going to stick with caladiums, Mr. Discon said that was fine with him.

Ms. Fuselier asked if they wanted to do the event Mother’s Day weekend or the weekend before. Mr. Discon suggested the weekend before.

Mr. Afton said that Saturday before Mother’s Day would be May 13<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Discon said the day before Mother’s Day is good that way you can buy them in time.

Ms. Fuselier reminded the commission that the Pollinator event rain day was May 6<sup>th</sup> so there could potentially be an event two weekends in a row.

**North Causeway Service Road Landscape Enhancement project and Fence**

Ms. Fuselier said that this project was not in the budget this year but she wanted the commission to go forward with designing something so they could present something to the city council for next years budget.

Mr. Discon added that DOTD was going to be doing roadwork in the area and they recommended waiting so any new plantings were not destroyed.

Ms. Frederick asked if Ms. Kervin was working on this, Mr. Discon said that she was.

Mr. Afton asked if this was the greenspace area in front of the Perlis store and if it included the fence at the end. Ms. Fuselier said yes to both those questions.

Mr. Discon said that he met with DOTD to talk about specifics for replacing the fence, and a cheaper option that was suggested to him was to use the existing poles so they would not have to re-cement the areas which he agreed with. He added that DOTD asked to be shown any plantings done by the fence so they could approve them.

Mr. Afton said that he was still looking for examples of trees as fences. Ms. Fuselier said that any example of something other than chain link could be used, even just plain wood.

Mr. Discon said that DOTD have the fence in place to prevent people from crossing the street.

Mr. Afton said it would be nice to have some natural fencing, Ms. Fuselier added that it would be an improvement even if it only looks more natural.

Mr. Discon said that he talked about a split rail fencing with the DOTD but they have certain standards they require. Ms. Fuselier said that if an example of that type of fence in use can be found they might allow it.

Mr. Discon said they were allowed to plant in front of the fence and DOTD said the plantings might even slow down the destruction of the fence.

**Four Corners Email**

Mr. Discon motioned to open the agenda to discuss the email from Franklin Kyle about the Four Corners Project.

Ms. Fuselier said the Mr. Kyle had finished the landscaping plan for the Four Corners project, mainly the south side. The focus will be shifting from heavy planting to live oaks and more simple stuff.

Mr. Afton asked if it would be symmetrical to the north side, Ms. Fuselier said not specifically. Ms. Frederick asked why not, Ms. Fuselier replied that the area would complement the existing oaks at Judge Tanner Blvd and would differentiate the north and south side.

Mr. Afton said he would like a visual example. It might look weird if it is not symmetrical, but he would need to see it.

Mr. Discon said there is an existing side garden close to the highway which could be supplemented with some oaks to match. The visual would be nice.

Ms. Fuselier said she would try to arrange Mr. Kyle coming to the next meeting with some visuals to show the Commission.

Mr. Afton said that a different layout could be abrasive without any connectivity.

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Ms. Frederick said there are high mounds on both sides and asked where the live oaks would go. Ms. Fuselier said they would go in the same area as the other trees, there is a grove at Judge Tanner Blvd that is a good example.

Mr. Afton said the other side of the bridge could be a future phase with some oaks.

**Arbor Day Seedling Giveaway**

Mr. Discon motioned to open the agenda to discuss the Arbor Day seedling giveaway.

Mr. Afton asked what the status was, Ms. Fuselier said they were on track, the seedlings should arrive before the event and a press release was sent to Alia and the Farmer.

Ms. Frederick suggested that the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission would be a good place to advertise events, Ms. Fuselier said she would look into it.

Mr. Afton asked if the Facebook page for the event could be sent to the Commission. Ms. Fuselier said she would.

**Staff Update**

Ms. Fuselier said that everything she had has already been covered.

**Public Comment**

Buck Abbey, 1129 Villere: Said that the projects talked about tonight deal with North Causeway. He knows some graduates who now work for the DOTD Highway Department which does landscape work for highways across the state and thought it would be interesting to get the director of the program to come in and talk about roadway landscaping. It is a tough job to balance all the different aspects. Ms. Fuselier said that the area in question is not part of the DOTD right of way so they would not be approving stuff. Mr. Abbey said it would be seen from the roadway so it might be beneficial for them to come. Public landscaping and gardens are different.

Mr. Abbey said that there is an upcoming landscape summit and would be a wonderful opportunity to talk about green infrastructure, which should be on the same level of importance as sewer, water, and electrical systems. This commission is the only one who deals with green infrastructure. Most average citizens cannot see the character of a place through the green infrastructure. Urban forests give a city character but that is slowly going away. This summit is to get people to plant trees on private property.

Ms. Frederick said that they need to stop people from wiping out large swaths of land. The City should offer incentives for people to plant trees on their land. Mr. Abbey said the re-leaf program is a good incentive for now, Ms. Frederick said that people should get rewarded like in Minnesota.

Mr. Abbey said there should be a summit like this once a year to discuss the landscape of the community. People need to be excited about planting trees on their property. The date for the summit is January 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm – 8:00pm. There will be speakers and the mayor's office is distributing information.

Ms. Frederick wondered if it was too late to talk to the Mayor about offering incentives. They show that the City is willing to make a sacrifice because trees are important. She also said the City should get tougher on tree loss and step up. If the City sets the criteria, then people should follow.

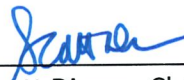
Mr. Discon said that the 18<sup>th</sup> is a Wednesday.

Ms. Fuselier said that Anne Marie has resigned from her position, so an advertisement is being put out for it. She added that Shelley's position is up for renewal since she filled a vacancy so she will have to resubmit for it.

Mr. Afton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:02pm, seconded by Ms. Winstead and was unanimously approved.



Alex Weiner, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman  
Parks and Parkways Commission