

Chairman Scott Discon called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

The secretary called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Will Afton, and Shelley Winstead

Absent: Anne Marie Fargason, Christy Kervin, Brien Croff

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

Minutes

Ms. Winstead made a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 9 meeting, Ms. Frederick seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business:

Spring Education Event Update

Ms. Frederick said she has lots of speakers and vendors lined up. There are five speakers so far, Will Afton with the LSU Ag Center, Jeff Hurchoff as the St. Josephs Abbey Beekeeper, Seth Nehrbass with Backyard Irrigation Systems, Patty Zebrick with Wild Ones, and Miche Collier with Natures Magic Farm. She said that Linda, the NOLA Bug Lady, is too busy this year but she would like to participate next year

Ms. Frederick said that for vendors she has two native nursery farms, Beaver Abundance and Chickadee Natives. She also spoke with Rue McNeil with the Northlake Nature Center and Christy Myers with the St. Tammany Children's Museum. She also spoke with Gerald Brookshire who sells bluebird houses.

Ms. Frederick said she had a list of maybes, Schmellys Dirt Farm in New Orleans was interested. They collect produce and compost it and would possibly do a talk on backyard composting. She also spoke with the Urban Conservancy which focus on native plants and green infrastructure along with permeable pavement.

Ms. Frederick said she was trying to get an insect hotel demonstration. Ms. Fuselier asked if any of the Master Gardners could do that, Mr. Afton said he did not know anyone who specialized in that area.

Mr. Afton asked if there was a timeline for the speakers. Ms. Frederick said not yet as there are two locations which differ if a speaker needs a projector or not.

Mr. Discon clarified for anyone unfamiliar that this was the Pollinator Event.

Ms. Winstead said the date of the event would be April 29th with a rain date of May 6th, Ms. Fuselier said that was correct.

Ms. Frederick said she had come up with a name for the event. The "2nd Annual Pollination Celebration at the Old Mandeville Trailhead Station" and then under it "Join Us, Bee There, Spread Your Wings".

Ms. Winstead asked if they had a sign yet, Ms. Fuselier said no as there was not a name chosen yet.

Mr. Discon said the rain dates should be included.

Ms. Frederick said that a flyer should be made.

Mr. Kreller said that a 4'x6' banner was about \$60, Mr. Discon said that it would need to be bigger.

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Mr. Discon suggested hanging the banner on the iron fence by the trailhead, Ms. Fuselier said that they would not be allowed to have the entire length.

Ms. Frederick said that maybe the sign could be reused somehow. Mr. Afton suggested to remove the "2nd" from the banner in order to reuse it.

Ms. Frederick asked about the dates and suggested them being on the flyer and not the banner. Ms. Fuselier said that Mr. Croff had suggested using Velcro for the area for the dates.

Ms. Frederick said it should have "Sponsored by Parks and Parkways" on the bottom.

Ms. Winstead said that the flyer should be distributed sooner rather than later.

Ms. Frederick said that the timeslots should be on the flyer.

Mr. Discon asked if there was a timeline for this, Ms. Winstead said that speakers should be firmed up by next meeting.

Ms. Fuselier said that names, dates, and timeslots were needed, and other things could be added.

Ms. Winstead said the Children's Museum was 100% in, Ms. Frederick asked if they needed tables, Ms. Winstead said she could help with that.

Ms. Frederick asked if they said what they were doing, Ms. Winstead said they have not. Ms. Fuselier said that can be firmed up at the next meeting.

Mr. Discon said that any seeds should be ordered now. Ms. Frederick said that Ms. Kervin had mentioned a seed blend.

Ms. Fuselier asked if an amount was said, Ms. Frederick said they need some to give away and some for seed-bombs and asked what the amount ordered last time was. Ms. Fuselier said last time was based on acres.

Ms. Frederick said that Bonnie Abbey needed some stuff, Ms. Fuselier said for her to send a list to herself, and Mr. Weiner and it would get ordered.

Arbor Day Seedling Giveaway Recap

Mr. Afton said it took place on January 28th and six species were given away. The commission prewrapped before the event so the bundles were ready to go. There were about 100 Nuttall Oaks left over and overall the event was very successful.

Mr. Discon asked if all the trees were given away, Ms. Fuselier said that there were a few left over which were given to Pelican Park.

Highway 190 and Highway 22 4 Corners Overpass Presentation

Franklin Kyle said that this is the south quadrant of East and West Causeway. The north-west side is beautiful and the reason is because it is being maintained and asked why the other side is not, Ms. Fuselier said it was removed from the budget about eight years ago.

Ms. Winstead asked where the area was as she was unfamiliar with the project. Mr. Kyle said it is on the left side if you are going north along Causeway. These are the southern quadrants and are on the inside if you are going south along Highway 22. It does not go to the fence.

Mr. Kyle said the Liberto quadrant is good and there are two schools of thought for the other areas, a lot of stuff or big things.

Mr. Kyle said the concept was lots of grasses and wedelia to match the other locations, along with some live oaks. The idea is to start a pattern with the live oaks to match Judge Tanner Blvd.

Mr. Discon said that live oaks could be added to other quadrants to match and asked if grasses could be added as well, Mr. Kyle said that could be done.

Mr. Kyle said that if money is spent then it will have to be maintained, the alternative is straight trees that can be mowed around. This plan needs to be maintained and committed to.

Mr. Discon said this was the core of the City, and should have the support to be maintained. Ms. Fuselier said that maintenance was usually priced out.

Ms. Winstead asked who was doing the maintenance on the northwest side, Ms. Fuselier said it was Alternative Services.

Mr. Discon asked what it would take to get the other side maintained, Ms. Fuselier said it would require a budget adjustment.

Mr. Discon asked what the price would be, Ms. Fuselier said they could look at the other side for an estimate.

Mr. Kyle said that if this plan was liked then he could do a cost estimate, or he could do a tree plan if the commission was not satisfied with this plan.

Mr. Discon said that Louissette had always talked about doing some wedelia so he felt like they should proceed in that direction for her.

Mr. Afton asked if the concept was too busy, Mr. Kyle replied no as it was only four species.

Ms. Frederick asked what was on the north side, Mr. Kyle said there was some Magnolia, Cypress, Hawthorne, and some grasses. Ms. Frederick asked if there could be some Palmettoes instead of Magnolias. Mr. Kyle said that live oaks would be used as the trees.

Ms. Frederick wondered if some cypress or magnolias could be planted to bring the trees on both sides. Mr. Kyle said his thoughts were to pull the next intersection in. He is ok with the change across the bridge. He can mimic the design on the north side, but there had been talk about more color and grasses.

Mr. Discon said they should incorporate the Lakeview exit into the city.

Mr. Afton said right now if you drive by the magnolias are what is prominent. Ms. Frederick said that she liked the magnolias.

Mr. Kyle said that he can replace some of the live oaks with magnolias. He would tweak the design and provide a rough cost estimate.

Mr. Discon asked if the wedelia would grow again, Ms. Fuselier said it would come back from the freeze.

Mr. Afton asked if there were any special rules for planting in a raised highway system, Mr. Kyle said you would have to be 30ft from the edge.

2023 – 2024 Short Term Work Program

Ms. Fuselier said to think about projects that you want to do for next year and the commission will vote on them at the next meeting.

Mr. Discon asked if the Marigny and Cemetery projects were in the capital budget. Ms. Fuselier said they were, but they were still under the commission's purview.

Ms. Winstead asked when the time to propose new projects was, Ms. Fuselier said it was next meeting.

Mr. Kreller said he had a project to propose, adding some white crape myrtles on the New Golden Shores Side and supplement with some Cherry Laurels. It would cost less than \$10,000. Mr. Discon asked if this would be all down Monroe Street, Mr. Kreller said it would be on the north side. Ms. Fuselier added that front yards would be skipped. Mr. Kreller said it would start at the white walls and go to the Old Town and take care of the left side.

Ms. Frederick asked where to add new projects, Mr. Discon said wherever. Ms. Fuselier said the current numbers did not matter.

East and West Causeway Medians

Mr. Discon asked if they had the money to order, Ms. Fuselier said once the budget adjustment comes through.

Mr. Discon asked what type they would use, Ms. Fuselier said it would depend on what the surrounding trees were.

Mr. Discon asked what type of tree was being replaced, Ms. Fuselier said it was Japanese Magnolias. Mr. Discon said they would be replaced with sturdy trees, Ms. Fuselier said that was correct.

Mr. Kreller asked if something on East Causeway died, Ms. Fuselier said yes. Mr. Discon said it looks barren now but there was Japanese Magnolia was what was started.

Mr. Discon asked if the budget adjustment was happening this week, Ms. Fuselier said it was.

Mr. Kreller said he would like to see the magnolias moved, Ms. Fuselier said those were part of a federal grant so they cannot be moved.

Ms. Frederick said for #3 on the Short Term Work Program they could put some southern red cedar by the fence replacement along with some wildflowers.

Malcolm Guidry said that we are located about 150 miles too far south for cedars.

Ms. Frederick asked if Eastern Cedar would be better, Mr. Guidry said there was a risk of disease and insect problems this far south.

Staff Update

Ms. Fuselier said the re-leaf program was wrapping up with the last plantings. About half the trees were handed out. Mr. Discon asked if there would be a budget adjustment for the next planting, Ms. Fuselier said yes, for the spring planting. Mr. Discon asked if the winter planting was going out, Ms. Fuselier said it was.

Mr. Discon said the program started after Katrina with two plantings of about 400 trees. It was doubled after Ida and was a little more than the City could handle. It is being finalized next month and the next time will be back to the original cycle.

Mr. Discon asked what the distribution of the trees was, Ms. Fuselier said it changes every year but its about even.

Public Comment

Mr. Discon said that he spoke with Buck Abbey and it feels like Pottery Hill was never finished. Mr. Abbey suggested doing some light maintenance and pulling weeds from the property.

Buck Abbey, 1129 Villere: There are lots of invasives in the area.

Mr. Discon suggested it could be a commission project and they could do it themselves.

Mr. Abbey said the main thing is to find out what needs to be done and how to do it. There are some simple things like picking up trash and getting rid of the invasive plants but it is an archeological site so it needs to be handled differently than a regular park or other open space.

Mr. Discon said the idea is to keep the area natural, Ms. Fuselier added that the City does not want to invite people to the site.

Mr. Discon said the commission could go out an inventory the site.

Mr. Abbey said there were two fallen trees that need to be addressed. Mr. Discon asked what type they were, Mr. Abbey said he did not remember but one was about 6-7" dbh and the other was 12-14" dbh. He added that the property is not accessible to handicapped people.

Ms. Fuselier said it should not be accessible to anybody.

Mr. Abbey said it is public property and public property is supposed to be accessible to everybody and it is not. Ms. Fuselier said the City does not want it to be accessible and is not trying to make it accessible. Mr. Abbey said you cannot do that, you cannot exclude someone just because you do not want them there.

Mr. Guidry asked if he heard correctly. Mr. Abbey said he did. He added that somebody in a chair could get a lawyer and file a lawsuit and win big money against the City and probably against Parks and Parkways in particular.

Ms. Fuselier said there are no trails out there and nothing for people to go to. It is just open space and not a public park. Mr. Abbey said it does not work that way, Ms. Fuselier replied that it does. It is the same as saying you cannot walk into the wetlands because it is not ADA accessible. This area is not a park and people are not invited to it. There are bollards and rope put up to keep people from going to it.

Mr. Abbey said that if the public owns the wetlands, then people have access to it. Ms. Fuselier said they can go in certain areas of the wetlands, but you still cannot get there in a wheelchair.

Mr. Abbey said that Ms. Fuselier should look into the National Park services regulations as they are the standard for access to public parks. Ms. Fuselier reiterated that this is not a public park. It is public land, but not a public park.

Mr. Abbey said he was not going to argue with Ms. Fuselier and said that he must have been teaching for 40 years wrongly if she was right.

Mr. Abbey also wanted to mention that he looks at public spaces and there seems to be a live oak lost in the longleaf pine area. One was taken out in a car accident. He said that he found a source of longleaf pine seedlings. The area looks like there is nothing there. It does not look like a conservation or reestablishment area as there are so few trees. He recommends putting some seedlings in the area in a more artistic fashion. If you look at it from the point of view of someone who understands design and beauty it needs the help of someone who can look at it from an artistic point of view.

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Ms. Frederick said it is supposed to be a natural area and they do not come in an artistic fashion. Mr. Abbey said it is also a demonstration area.

Mr. Discon said they have been talking about this for years, they should pick an amount of trees and a plant date. Ms. Frederick said about 10 trees.

Ms. Frederick asked if there was any information about the sign, Mr. Kreller said that nobody has come forward.

Mr. Discon asked when the burn would be and the deadline, Ms. Fuselier said she is waiting to hear back from her contact and the deadline is the end of February to the beginning of March.

Ms. Frederick asked if they would plant the longleaf after the burn, Ms. Fuselier said yes.

Mr. Afton asked if they would need an official request.

Ms. Winstead made a motion to plant ten longleaf pines in the savanna area after the burn in the spring of 2023, Mr. Afton seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Discon asked if they would talk about Pottery Hill at the next meeting, Mr. Afton said they need to figure out what to do.

Ms. Winstead suggested that the cleanup could be for service hours for boy scouts or students.

Mr. Kreller said this could be an Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Discon said they could do it themselves as they are having trouble with getting the cemetery completed, Ms. Fuselier said they were waiting on the mausoleums for that.

Mr. Afton mentioned that people have stated they do not want the area cleaned up, Ms. Winstead said it could be cleaned up under supervision. Ms. Fuselier said they need to figure out what work needs to be done first.

Ms. Winstead motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:13pm, seconded by Mr. Afton and was unanimously approved.



Alex Weiner, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman
Parks and Parkways Commission