Parks and Parkways Commission
Public Hearing
June 8, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Karin Crosby and the secretary called the roll.

Present: Karin Crosby, Anne Marie Fargason, Lee Frederick, Dodie Marshall, and Nancy Clark

Absent: Scott Discon and Robert Santopadre

Also Present: Louisette Kidd, Planning Director; Mayor Donald Villere

Ms. Clark moved to discuss public art at the beginning of the meeting, seconded by Ms. Crosby and was unanimously approved

Mayor Villere presented Sylvia Schmidt and Bobby Warrens who offered to acquaint the committee on public art.

They presented that they had worked together since the 1980s. Some of Mr. Warrens work was the golden column at the Harrah's Casino, an easel celebration in Hammond, sculpture in NOMA and the Ogden, the Tulane Architecture School, many private collections and murals, the Lakeview library, a mural for K & B, over 100 books and magazines articles, a retrospective at NOMA, and a mural at the Baton Rouge Community College.

Mr. Warrens presented that the process often was the organization opening up a project with a request for proposals. A committee would select three people for their presentation. Since Hurricane Katrina many artists had come to New Orleans and there were more galleries opening. He liked lively and entertaining art that was not too ponderous. Much of his current artwork was entertaining. Mayor Villere felt the board was looking for entertaining sculptures. Ms. Clark said the proposed area was abandoned park space and the city had connected the area with bike paths and the committee needed a reason to slow everyone down, sit on a bench and take it in. Shade was created with the bridges, planting was tough without the sunlight and the board thought public art would be a good way to put the real estate to work.

Mr. Warren said he had heard about the roundabouts in the area. He had moved to Mandeville in 2003 with four acres in the woods. His current thought for a medium would be painted aluminum. His presentation of some of his art was based on the celebration of nature.

Ms. Clark said financing was an interesting question and the board did not understand how to get the artists to submit ideas. Mr. Warrens asked if there was corporate sponsorship similar to Percent for Art in New Orleans. The Percent for Art was a fixed budget and artists submitted proposals from that. There were also manufacturing and installation costs. Ms. Clark asked in the Percent for Art if the taxpayers paid for it or to pursue corporate sponsorship. Mayor Villere said the discussion was to introduce the process and get an idea. The board asked what would be the price if one piece was 10' or 12' tall. Mr. Warrens said it would be a gradual journey. If the board decided on a theme and a number of sculptures then they would request a design from local artists. It could be a several year program. Ms. Crosby said the board had discussed a nautical theme since Mandeville was a mariner's area with the lakefront. The sculpture would be located in no rain areas. There was maintenance work that would be done over the next 18 months on the Causeway Bridge by Monroe Street so the public art would be installed after that time. Ms. Crosby said she, Mr. Discon and Ms. Scott were coordinating a meeting with the Veteran's Boulevard art program to discuss the process.

Ms. Schmidt said the Veterans Boulevard was mixed art and sculptures with no theme. There was a discussion that one of Mr. Warrens' sculptures was administered by the Art Council of New Orleans with the Percent for Art process. Percent for Art was 1% of the building cost, but the park was not a building. Rod Rodrigue's blue dog on veterans was funded by a patron. Ms. Clark said a corporate underwriter could be a consideration. Mayor Villere asked about the cost of the column at Harrah's Casino and Mr. Warrens answered that the cost was $100,000 being 128' long and 28' tall. One of his roundabout pieces was a complex that would be cost comparisons of fabricators. Ms. Crosby asked if the art was typically aluminum and Mr. Warrens answered that was a basic medium because cast bronze was costly. It was asked if kids would hide under the sculpture climbed on. Ms. Schmidt said there was a sculpture that was attractive to children and it had to be raised. Ms. Clark liked the idea of color under the overpass. Ms. Crosby said it would be nice to have the pedestrians and cars look at something.

Mayor Villere asked how many sculptures they would suggest. Ms. Crosby said facing north there were two overpasses with a span about 20-40' in length and there was green space in-between. Ms. Crosby said the board would be planting to beautify and the sculptures would be a visual aspect to soften the appearance of the brick and mortar. Mr. Warrens said with an overpass the structure should not be too vertical and should relate to the movement of the road. He suggested a number of low level pieces to break up the height. Ms. Crosby said the board was considering nautical or sailboats. Ms. Clark liked wetlands and pine areas. Ms. Crosby liked ducks. Ms. Fargason suggested wildflowers. Mr. Warrens suggested not getting too literal with exact boats. Ms. Schmidt said the artist's interpretation brings the magic.

It was discussed for planning purposes to look three years down the road at the process and costs. There could be a fund for corporate sponsorship and any other donations. The ART Collaborative group could help raise the money. Ms. Fargason said working with the symphony, corporate money was tight. Mayor Villere suggested looking for matching grants. Ms. Frederick said the city needed to commit a certain amount of funds so people would know it was important.

Minutes

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of May 4, 2015, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

Opening of the Agenda

Ms. Clark moved to open the agenda for Honeybees and Monarch Butterfly habitats; mulch the philodendron gardens around the columns under the Causeway; mulch the garden beds on Girod Street at the lakefront; marina and boat launch at the Harbor – plant cypress trees along the sidewalk to provide shade for the dock, seconded by Ms. Crosby and was unanimously approved.

New Business

Spring Education Follow Up

Ms. Crosby said both speakers were excellent and very informational. But As usual, there were not enough people in attendance. Mr. Discon said the market was slow for all of the vendors. Ms. Frederick said with a focus to the public the educational might go better. Ms. Clark said especially with a hook. She suggested

the first 25 people get milkweed seeds. Ms. Scott said the committee needed a mission statement with the goals. Suggestions were:

- to naturalize the City as part of the press release and it could be used when applying for grants,
- the urban tree canopy was a board designation,
- incorporating trees into the dynamic.
- the master tree plan and sections were to develop natural habitat and there could be a working form of a document for funding and grants.
- an effort to return our public spaces to natural maintenance free habitats.
- make it working with nature.
- carefree instead of maintenance free.
- under list goals.

Mr. Discon said Highway 190 could be planted with wildflowers. Ms. Crosby asked about the benches. Ms. Scott said it was not done at this time.

Ravine Aux Coquilles Tree Planting

Ms. Crosby asked if in the fall if the Eagle Scouts could help plant trees on the lakefront. It was overgrown, which was fine, but cypress trees should be planted. Ms. Scott said it was planted because of the utilities. On the northwest side, the property was donated to the City.

Ms. Crosby said Ms. Gleason had spoken with someone who wanted to donate 30-40 plants that lived in Lakewood Heights. He wanted to know that we would transplant them.

Honeybees and Monarch Butterfly Habitats

Ms. Crosby had found a grant that would be due by July 31st that would award $500 a year to communities for habitat development. She asked if a butterfly garden location could be developed and suggested the green space on the Tammany Trace by the cemetery and bridge bringing in the nature trail and beautifying the cemetery. It was hoped that some wildflower might seed into the swamp.

Ms. Crosby asked about benches. Mayor Villere suggested checking with the Public Works Department.

Ms. Clark asked seeing new soil around the Trailhead if there would be a butterfly garden. Ms. Scott said there was an upgrading of landscaping from Monroe South with the removal of the pavers. Mayor Villere said the project was bid as a single package block by block southbound. The installation would be after hurricane season.

Ms. Frederick suggested germinating milkweed in little cups as a giveaway as a start of a monarch project. Ms. Frederick volunteered to start the germination.

The wildflower program was in fall would be to seed and then cut. At some times of the year, the meadow would look ratty. Mr. Discon asked about considering the planting of wildflowers under the Causeway Bridge. Ms. Crosby asked if there were plans for the Highway 22 expansion and it was stated they were not drawn at this time. She felt all of the plantings should match. The plantings would only on the west side. Ms. Clark said it was now a federal program to recreate habitats. As a City, it was an opportunity to step up. Ms. Crosby said in Louisiana, they were planting prairie grass outside of Lafayette because it had deeper roots and allowing compaction to be broken up. As the overpass came down, the City could create a

rain garden. Mr. Discon asked if there was a cost for planting and sculptures. Ms. Scott said she worked with Adam Perkins, who designed the wildflower area and subbed the work to Meadow Makers. He cultivated native wildflowers in certain areas that worked.

Ms. Clark said golden rod was good for fall planting. Ms. Frederick said if the board would be moving forward with this project, the board would need a catch phrase or idea for the project to draw attention. Two suggestions were natural habitat enrichment and milkweed for monarchs. Ms. Crosby suggested getting placards to describe the flower. All of the board was in agreement for the name Mandeville Natural Habitat Preservation by the Parks and Parkways Commission so it could apply to any project. All of the board would send in ideas. Mr. Discon moved to adopt the name, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved. The work program would present a bigger goal to create more natural habitat throughout Mandeville. Ms. Scott suggested including in the City Council budget to create a natural habitat which could be a lot of things.

Mulch the Philodendron Gardens Around the Columns under the Causeway

This could be resolved with wildflowers. Ms. Scott said she would look into mulch.

Mulch the garden beds on Girod Street

Some mulch could be added but it would be better to wait because they would be torn out for re-landscaping.

Marina and Boat Launch at the Harbor

Mr. Discon said cypress trees were planted after Hurricane Katrina, but there were no other trees by the pavilion. He suggested continuing planting in the fall. It was best to wait until after hurricane season. There was no irrigation and the planting may need to be placed under the maintenance project.

It was also suggested to discuss a rain garden under the causeway overpass with Jan Mistich. Ms. Frederick said the board should install a sign on each project.

Ms. Clark asked about the new trash can map for the lakefront. Ms. Scott said she had discussed it a few times, but the Public Work Department was understaffed at this time.

Ms. Frederick said the Eagle Scout found another project.

Mr. Discon moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

Lori Spranley, Secretary

Karin Lorenz Crosby, Chairwoman