Parks and Parkways Commission
Public Hearing
September 14, 2015

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

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

Absent: Scott Discon

Also Present: Louisette Scott, Planning Director; Eric Schouest, Danny Schaus, Chris Cooper and Charlie DeLuca from Cleco; Council Member Ernest Burguieres; and Dr. Malcolm Guidry, Consulting Arborist

Eric Schouest said he had been with Cleco for 15 years and for the last 10 years had been located in Mandeville. He was in charge of Governmental Affairs for the state, and handling all of the franchises. He was present to support the conversation and follow up on complaints and how the trees were trimmed. They wanted a positive interaction and were open to any suggestions. Chris Cooper was located in the distribution area (lines across the streets and the byways), and Charlie DeLuca worked in the field with Mr. Cooper. Mr. Schaus was the principle governmental services for the region. In the last 10 years, the requirements on Cleco had changed. Both on the federal and local levels there were changes for public safety because one of the largest fatality issues was contact with the system and trees had much to do with that. In the City's recent franchise agreement there was a requirement to notify the City, especially along the lakefront.

Ms. Crosby said Mr. Discon had many of the questions and he was out of town. He was concerned regarding the live oak trees and how they were being trimmed, especially on Carroll/Monroe Streets. Cleco removed a major leader in the canopy and caused water to sit at the top of the tree. Mr. DeLuca said looking at it from a horticulture standpoint, the cuts were correct. If parts of the tree were removed, they tried to deadwood relevant limbs. They wanted to consider the integrity of the trees from disease and animals, and the work was overseen by an arborist for the correct cuts, and it was directional pruning to be away for the metal line. They communicated with the customers and worked with the municipalities. From a reliability standpoint, the vegetation management and service reliability was to make sure the lines and trees can exist. They were familiar with the Mandeville area and the Monroe Street area in this case. This year the Penn Street substation circuits were stepped down from 34,500 volts to 13,200 volts and was divided into circuits. Cleco did not trim by streets, but worked off of the circuit maps. The workers are aware of the type of trees, i.e. live oak, magnolia and cypress trees. They were knowledgeable and were making cuts directional or for the health of the tree so they would not get sprouts and keep the clearance. The customers affected also included the sewer lifts, schools, and the fire department on Girod Street. It went down Monroe Street due south at Carroll Streets which fed the school. The two Penn Street circuits were on the scheduled list this year. There was scheduled work and also work by customers and orders by the line mechanics.

Ms. Clark said the City and board need to determine how everyone can do a better job moving forward so there were no surprises. She asked how did Cleco notify their customers. Ms. Crosby said with Ms. Gleason no longer with the City and paperwork being dropped off, there was a miscommunication getting to the department. Ms. Scott asked about door hangers. Mr. DeLuca said they did not usually do door hangers but they did drop off maps. It was often a day to day process. Ms. Scott said Mr. DeLuca now had her contact information. Mr. Cooper said if it was a complete trimming, they would distribute door hangers. The project was often just for a few days. Communication was hard to manage because jobs would stop and restart a few weeks later. Mr. Cooper said it seemed like a little thing in someone's yard, but depending on the tree location there could be a possibility of affecting a large group of people, medical needs, nursing homes and fire stations. Ms. Clark said if people knew, it would be

proactive. She asked about Asplundh. Mr. Cooper said they were one of the contractors in this area for day to day trimming. There was a wooded area on Carroll Street that was a mess so she was concerned that there was an arborist. She asked in talking to the crews, where there were areas with numerous trees that they insulated the wires. Mr. Cooper said the crews were overseen and trained for correct cuts, but an arborist was not always on site. The workers were not spokespersons and were there to perform a job. If there were questions that were power related, it would be referred to Mr. DeLuca. There was wire called tree wire, which had some advantages, but there were disadvantages. When the tree wire was installed, it could perform well but you do not want limbs to get close to it because it was for incidental contact. If there was friction and it could fault with an outage and now the workers was looking for a scuff mark. The largest part was if there was a tree on a line then the wire would break and the breakers would turn it off. While the tree wire may not break, the poles and cross arms may break. It could cause so much damage to the system that service restoration was longer. Cleco had used tree wire in past years, but it had its own challenges. A good tree maintenance program for protection was better.

Ms. Clark asked going forward what as a city can be done to get some of the canopy back. There were places that the poles were staggered. Could an idea be developed to relocate the pole? Mr. Cooper said these were questions that helped them to understand. If another event came through that destroyed 90% of the trees as an extreme example, the poles and equipment was located on the GIS system. The poles would be replaced in the same spot. They had a right-of-way for pole locations. Ms. Clark said Carondelet Street was an example with large trees and canopy because of the staggered pole. Ms. Scott asked if that was beneficial to be staggered. Mr. Cooper said it was great if it was around the trees. Ms. Clark asked if that could be used as a model. Mr. Schouest said he saw fundamentals if there was a destroyed area to convert to underground lines. The conductor will hold up to wind, but the canopy was so heavy and causes the most damage. The rate base cannot pay for underground and must be paid for by the citizens or the city. Staggering would add to the cost of construction. In the St. Tammany historical neighborhoods there were some rear lot locations. People want their power back as quickly as possible. To design or construct at that time, they would have to deconstruct and rebuilt with an incremental cost by the Homeowners Association or the City. They could do a better communication job focus and partner with Dr. Guidry for oak trees by making mutual decisions. That would take an effort to work together. Cleco was held to a certain requirement by the Public Service Commission. Trees were the reason people want to be on the Northshore. Asplundh had been a great partner and an arborist was within a few miles, if not on site. If they need to improve, they would do it. Mr. Schouest suggested in certain areas that they could at the next process create a mutual discussion, but they were in agreement to it slowing down the process. Cleco was not cutting close to the level they could cut. They were not getting to the near perimeters to get to the next cycle. The crew was struggling to give answers, but a cleaner cut would look more drastic. Ms. Clark said there was no big plan to help create a canopy. Mr. Cooper said it was a give and take. Cleco was trying to create a balance by taking limbs in decay and knowing above that line was Cleco's liability. They were trying to balance their cutting and being partners with the communities since they all lived here. They try when they can to get 20' for a canopy. When a limb breaks it would be in the line. If you raise the canopy and the limb falls, it could miss the wire. From a committee perspective, when there were opportunities to plant trees many times it was the wrong tree in the right place. The trees were beautiful when planted, but they were under the line and they would not meet the potential. Ms. Frederick said the board was conscious of tree locations for planting.

Ms. Frederick asked if there were any future projects to bury the lines in sensitive areas. Mr. Schouest said it was about the money. He said if there were underground lines, the differential cost was paid by the developer so a rate base did not pay the cost. He suggested creating a committee, picking a section to be a phase, have Cleco

demonstrate the cost options, present it to the City or subdivision and then discuss to alter it. Mr. Burguieres suggested the area being Coffee Street to the lake which would have been an opportunity because it was torn up for 8 months. He suggested talking to the City about projects before they started. Voltage was sometimes too expensive because copper went underground with a larger line. Ms. Clark said the City looked at the costs on Lakeshore Drive and it was too expensive. Mr. Schouest said it would be about $1 Million a mile. Ms. Clark said it would have also been a heavy loss of trees. Mr. Burguieres said if it was our choice then it would be our choice. Mr. Schouest said the utility company was a part of the choice. He would explain to the customers about less liability. Mr. Burguieres said it cost him $1,000 for 40' of underground line at his home. He got dozens of phone calls and if he was notified he would notify his constituents. Email was much better and more instantaneous. He did not care about anything other than District 3 and the people would pay for the underground lines to keep the tree line. If he knew in advance, he would contact his constituents. Ms. Scott said in the past the staff had walked through the area and could they send it as an email. Mr. Schouest said he could do whatever the City wanted. Ms. Frederick asked if Cleco was finished, and Mr. Cooper said there were still two Penn Street circuits. Ms. Scott suggested outlining the area with a yellow marker for awareness. Mr. Clark suggested sending it as a shape file. The staff could then print it out and could see it. There was a suggestion of a Collaborative Agreement for tree planting with the same database for suggested places to plant. Ms. Scott said it was discussed that if there were hot spots and continuous problems, the City wanted to look at those and if they had to remove the tree Cleco had participated in proper replanting. Mr. Schaus said they had provided overlay information with other municipalities and it was not an issue.

Ms. Crosby said she lived on Lafayette Street with a line from Monroe Street that stopped at her house. From Jefferson Street, it came back down. There were two different circuits, and she asked with new construction to get to it from a different angle to feed it. Mr. Cooper said that area was designed long ago. When you break up the circuit to split up the load and minimize the exposure, depending it could be tied together and sometimes not. Ms. Crosby said if there were large trees or wooded area with alternate routes, why cut through the forested area and come another angle. Mr. Cooper said they try that from the beginning looking at the impact on the trees. It went back to the individual tree. Mr. Burguieres said Old Mandeville was built up and was looking at individual lots. At the planning level what would be the least offensive way to locate the line. Mr. Schouest said Cleco can look at anything, but they could not force the builder into a more expensive process. They would look at the impacts with options, but with a planning review they could decide how it was to be done because they would pay for it. Mr. Burguieres asked if he could contact Mr. Schouest about costs. Ms. Crosby said tree roots may not allow burying the lines. Mr. Schouest said boring was expensive. Mr. Schouest said Scott Biggers was the department responsible for providing the assessment cost.

Ms. Frederick asked if they cut through all of the seasons and Mr. Cooper said yes. They were doing trimming unless there was a circumstance of a removal because of human life. They try to preserve the animal nests. Ms. Fargason asked about the instructions to the crew on the form of the trees. On Highway 22 Asplundh had cut one side of the pine trees at the Beau Chene fence line. Mr. Santopadre said that was done because of Hurricane Katrina with all of the poles being down. Ms. Fargason asked about the oak tree by Mandeville Elementary School that was cut with a U, was there any other way to trim the tree differently. Mr. Cooper said it was because of where the tree was located and they did cause it. The tough part was to try to keep the smaller limbs cut back. If there was a large leader, it might be dead. They were trying to be a partner, and it was about perception. They were trying to do directional trimming. Mr. Burguieres suggested giving an option of cutting until an associated cost of two poles was provided and the City could make the decision. He did not want this to become Kenner. Mr. Cooper said people also want their power. Mr. Burguieres suggested doing a zig zag

around it and Mandeville could decide if it wanted to bear the cost. Mr. Schaus said once a circuit map was given to the City then ride that out. If a tree was within the area then have a discussion on how to make a bend in the road. Mr. Cooper said it was a one at a time process. Instead of waiting for a tree map, start now. He suggested the Monroe/Coffee Street tree and what can be done the next time. Mr. Cooper said if have "x" tree, let's look at it and make suggestions. Ms. Scott suggested to begin looking at it now.

Mr. Clark said in coming to the meeting it was realized we were the customers and a cooperative endeavor meant something. Cleco had laid the groundwork for a level of cooperation and that was the takeaway from the meeting. Ms. Frederick said they understood caring. Mr. Clark said the board was responsible for the tree canopy and now Cleco asked how they could help.

Ms. Clark suggested asking for a cost to avoid that oak in the future. It was a starting point. Mr. Schouest said the process needed to be more formal. He suggested creating a committee with Cleco and selecting 2-3 scenarios. Cleco would have their engineers look at it with options and costs. He also suggested including Dr. Guidry along with their arborist so it would be mutual. Cleco had received much feedback on the last trimming. Their people had been cursed at, starting when they pull up. Ms. Clark said it was about communication and she apologized for some of the citizens that treated the workers that way. Mr. Schouest said the workers were instructed if they were cursed at or treated improperly, they should not have a dialogue and call a Cleco representative. The safety of their personnel was important. They were instructed to stop and leave. Cleco would partner more at this level and it would be important the group. He could not promise they could accomplish everything, but if the wallet was open they would try to help. The cost for moving a pole could be $10,000 but other connections created a larger expense. Mr. Schouest gave his commitment to get outside the box on some situations. He wanted to look at pilot areas. Ms. Frederick said the community would hear about the cooperation and it could help the attitudes.

Dr. Guidry said Cleco had provided electricity to this community before anyone was born. The tree canopy was good and better than some communities. He had dealings on all sides and other than a few quirks Cleco did an excellent job for providing safe power. Ms. Scott said we were committed to working with Cleco. Dr. Guidry said to be realistic, there were costs and options. Mr. Burguieres said Cleco was the most responsive power company. Dr. Guidry said Mr. Cooper mentioned the Public Service Commission giving edicts, and they could prune more severely to the sky. They did an excellent job overall to preserve the tree canopy in Mandeville. Ms. Frederick said she appreciated them attending the meeting. Mr. Cooper said it was a sensitive subject and he appreciated the board working with Cleco.

Dr. Guidry said there was more trees and wildlife than 100 years ago in this area. Ms. Scott said she wanted the board to get copies of Dr. Guidry's book from 2001. The board had discussed in the Short Term Work Program to create a project list and one of the projects was revisiting the Master Tree Plan. Ms. Scott requested the board read the and consider it as a future agenda item.

Girod Street Master Plan

Ms. Scott would forward the plans to the board. Bids would be obtained to the lake with repairs to the irrigation and replaced it damaged. All of the pavers in the small areas that were broken would be removed. The brick would be the same as by Nuvolari's. It would not be a complete replanting but would be replaced. It would start within a month and would take 3-4 months for completion.

Ms. Crosby said with the Cleco discussion, was there a list of all major oak trees on City property. Mr. Burguieres had asked about registering the trees with the Live Oak Society. Ms. Crosby said it went back to board needing to work on the tree plan to make sure we know the locations and sizes. The board should also have a list of trees other than live oak trees. Ms. Scott said on the coast they had their own society and set the standards. Ms. Clark said Madisonville registered their live oaks several years ago. They named their oaks with marble plaques using their mayor's names. Dr. Guidry said the Live Oak Society was great. He asked what were the advantages of registering. It would be recognition. Ms. Crosby said Mr. Burguieres was under the impression that being registered that the tree was protected and that was not the case. Ms. Clark said the board could create a map as part of a walking tour. Ms. Frederick said it would be education. Dr. Guidry said he was developing a paper that would be 10-12 pages on sustainability and the City could print it for distribution. He would like the board to tweak it. It was 20 years ago that Dr. Lorenzo and himself did a survey of all public trees. The report was by species, diversity, and size. Dr. Guidry said there had been a survey through the water bills about creating a millage to pay for sustainability. That was published in a national journal. There was a display in the lobby that was also displayed in 4-5 national cities. The displayed talked about the City acceptance and the Mandeville tree coverage. Ms. Crosby said it would interesting to do a new survey for applicability.

Dr. Guidry said LSU added $1 to the football ticket to pay for the mulching of all of the live oak trees on the LSU campus. Ms. Clark asked Dr. Guidry to look at the live oak tree on Marigny Avenue almost to the lake. The board needed advice of how to stop people from parking on it. The tree was located on the west side of Marigny Avenue with no curbing. Last weekend there were three cars parking on the roots. It needed to be mulched and barricaded.

Mr. Santopadre asked about the type of mulch used in Baton Rouge. Dr. Guidry said it was fresh raw mulch when Asplundh cut trees. Ms. Clark said the mulching on the trees looked great. Dr. Guidry said the first rule was to do no injury. Remediating health was difficult. Compaction could not be undone. The greatest misnomer on mature live oak trees was fertilization without prudent thought about what to use and how to use it.

Ms. Crosby moved to open the agenda, seconded by Ms. Clark to discuss the purchase of seedlings and was unanimously approved.

Ms. Frederick reported on her searching for seedlings. Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama had all closed their nurseries with budget cuts. Will Afton provided information for Rick Webb with a native nursery, but he was not helpful with seedlings. She looked at private companies and would call them. Ms. Frederick had also found that the Arbor Day Foundation could provide 12-16" seedlings for $500 for 500 trees and they were prepackaged. The problem would be that the order must be all same species and the choices were long leaf pines and bald cypress for our native trees.

Ms. Crosby said there were the milkweed seeds that could be planted. Ms. Frederick said the seeds were germinating, but there would not be enough to give away. Dr. Guidry suggested checking with other state places to sell us their overstock. He suggested researching Florida, Texas and Tennessee. Ms. Fargason said she would check with her daughter who was employed by the Ag Center.

Minutes

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of July 13 and August 17, 2015, seconded by Mr. Santopadre and was unanimously approved.

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

Lori Spranley, Secretary

Karin Lorenz Crosby, Chairwoman