

**Parks and Parkways Commission
February 4, 2019**

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

Present: Scott Discon, Nancy Clark, Anne Marie Fargason, Lee Frederick, Marilyn Osborne; Eric McQuiston and Karin Crosby

Absent: None

Also Present: Louissette Scott, Planning Director; Catherine Casanova, Landscape Inspector, Council Member Laure' Sica

Minutes

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of November 13 and December 3, 2018, seconded by Ms. Fargason and was unanimously approved.

Mr. McQuiston moved to adopt the minutes of January 7, 2019, seconded by Ms. Osborne and was unanimously approved.

Opening of Agenda:

Ms. Clark moved to open the agenda to discuss the Bike Path and Live Oak Trees by Mary, Queen of Peace on West Causeway Approach, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

Tonya Everett, 1493 Rue Bayonne, said she wanted to discuss the first phase of the proposed bike path which was to the east of the Fontainebleau Subdivision past the Mary, Queen of Peace Church to connect to the sidewalk. She was concerned about their subdivision entrance and the path would cut across the canopy of the live oak tree. The plans stated there would be a transition from asphalt to concrete under the live oak tree. The subdivision was opposed to the path. It was redundant. Ms. Frederick said it appeared to be a waste of money. Ms. Everett stated the path would eventually go to the Shadows Subdivision. Ms. Frederick said the only crossover was by Mary, Queen of Peace and there was no crossover by the Shadows Subdivision. Ms. Everett said the intent was to connect to the path on the south side of West Causeway. Their concern was the sign clutter with three signs adjacent to their entrance. They had concerns about the appearance and the trees.

Ms. Clark asked for other suggestions in place of the bike path. Ms. Everett thought there was no need for another path with the installation of a button push pedestrian crossing as well as a crossing by Mandeville High. The south side not used that often.

Mr. Discon said this was a grant and he asked if it could be modified for crosswalks. Ms. Scott said this was a project included in the Master Bicycle Plan, funded by the Regional Planning Commission and it was out to bid. Ms. Crosby asked why there had not been a commission review because it was a live oak tree. Ms. Scott said the site was reviewed with the live oak trees over a year ago with the early discussions. The staff did not know it would be funded when it was reviewed and she did not know it was out to bid.

Ms. Clark asked if the subdivision had spoken with the Council Members and Mayor Villere. Ms. Scott said they had met with the Mayor. Ms. Everett said it would be a 10' asphalt path while the south side was an 6-8' concrete path. Ms. Scott said as part of the Complete Streets Program, which was a DOTD initiative, the path was now required to be 10'. Ms. Crosby asked if the surface must be asphalt and not concrete. Mr. McQuiston said asphalt was less expensive. Ms. Crosby did not like that the path was going between two live oak trees. Ms. Scott said comments were forward to engineering and she understood it was concrete to create a raised sand bridge to protect the tree roots.

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Ms. Frederick said it did not make sense to spend money in this manner. Ms. Clark said it was not the City money but a grant. Ms. Scott said the request began with the businesses along Dalwill Drive and people trying to get to Dalwill Drive for access from the neighborhoods to the commercial area.

Ms. Everett said a neighborhood letter was circulated informing them of the project and there were negative responses. She was concerned it would destroy their entrance with no guarantee that it would be re-established at no cost to them. Ms. Clark asked about Mr. Ellis' comments which were unknown.

Council Member Sica said she was aware of the path, but not the design. She had heard that everyone wanted the path. When she rode her bike, it was difficult to get from the east to the west side. It was dangerous crossing West Causeway Approach. Ms. Frederick said there was no crossover. Ms. Sica said she wanted crossovers and you had to dodge cars to cross the street. No one knew of any opposition.

Ms. Frederick asked if the grant money could be re-appropriated. Mr. McQuiston said Complete Streets was a national project. Other communities were demanding this project. He agreed with the crossovers. Ms. Sica said the path would be in three phases to connect Dalwill Drive to Highway 22 to allow east to west access.

Ms. Crosby said by the Shadows Subdivision, which was Phase 3, there was no connection at the bayou. Ms. Sica thought it would cross over to connect. Ms. Crosby was disheartened and surprised that the commission had not heard about the project. They were volunteers and these were the two largest oak trees on the west side of the town that they were trying to protect. Ms. Scott said the consulting Arborist had made a recommendation. Ms. Crosby said the commission should have had input and been able to ask for a redesign not to impact the live oak trees.

Mr. Discon said he heard about it two years ago and the commission was not asked to review the project at that time. He thought it had been discussed and Mr. Ellis had wanted more projects for the west side of the City since it was thought that Old Mandeville got the money.

Ms. Clark said the issue was signage and not just trees. Mr. McQuiston asked if there was a plan to mitigate the subdivision entrance and return it to the existing condition. Ms. Everett said Mayor Villere told them there was no guarantee. Ms. Scott said the plan did not include any revamping of the entrance because it was not a part of the funding of the project. She understood the City would pay for it. The City must deal with the plans first and then come back to the planting. There would be someone hired to do the work at the City's cost. Mayor Villere could not commit because there was no plan in hand, but there would be a replanting.

Ms. Everett said there would be two bumps that was a safety issue. The path would pass 3' from the end houses. Ms. Scott said the trees between West Causeway Approach and the path should remain intact except for a few tight areas. Mr. McQuiston felt it was a great amenity for the City. Ms. Everett said there was a stucco wall and you would not see the bike from the right so it was a safety issue. There would be numerous signs at their entrance.

Mr. Discon asked using gravel by the live oak trees. Mr. McQuiston said gravel would create compaction where the concrete will bridge over it. His issue with the concrete was that the roots would eventually push up, and the best solution was a raised deck bridge. Ms. Crosby said with concrete there were forms and pounding into the ground. Mr. McQuiston hoped there would be sand placed to bridge over the roots which was common engineering. Ms. Crosby asked if there was any other way to mitigate around the trees. Ms. Casanova said the

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path would have to be located on Mary, Queen of Peace's property. Mr. McQuiston asked if there was any way to find out about the projects prior to action. Ms. Sica said the projects were discussed in the budget hearings. She suggested reviewing the budget and forwarding any notes to the City Council. The bike path was included in the budget for the last two years because the original bids were too high.

Rhonda Aleman, 1413 Rue Bayonne, said the City was spending \$400,000 on the project. It was federal money and the state was the monetary funnel. She said no one in the subdivision was against bike paths and that was the way to get around. They did have concerns about their front entrance, safety, not having enough space between three walls, and the line of sight was restricted. A nice crossover would be a good option. Originally, it would only be a benefit to the Fontainebleau Subdivision. The subdivision board was not contacted by the City. There was no landscaping plan and no commitment from the Mayor to re-establish the landscaping back to the current value. They had spent thousands of dollars for aesthetic quality that in turn raised the property value for the residents. It was an insult that there would be a few plants in the replanting. Mr. McQuiston said his recommendation would be to hire a landscape architect for a redesign. The solution might be better than the existing.

Mr. Discon suggested putting money on the safety issues with the possibility of creating need openings in wall for better visibility. It sounded like the project was coming. There was an issue of getting money for tree planting. Ms. Frederick said the path would be a few blocks area. Ms. Aleman said a crossover was a better solution. It was the natural buffer that would be removed losing a sound buffer. There was poor communication. They would rather have an east side approach to connect to the lakefront. She agreed West Causeway could be treacherous. The bridge was not often used.

Mr. McQuiston said he trained with DOTD and this was the way communities were going. Some of the grant monies were available in the proximity of a school. His complaint was the suicide lane on Florida Street with schools within one mile. There were funds available for traffic safety improvements. The Regional Planning Commission had grant writers and it would not surprise him if grant money came from the school proximity. On the East Causeway Approach there was no school proximity.

Ms. Frederick said it was a poor use of money for a two block path that residents did not want. It would remove greenery and was taking away property owners privacy.

New Business:

1. Recommendation to City Council regarding Ordinance 19-01, Pottery Oak

Council Member Sica presented Ordinance 19-01 was an ordinance to rezone the Pottery Hill site. When the City purchased the property, it was zoned R-1, Single Family Residential, and PM, Planned Marina District. It was purchased to take it out of commerce. It was a good idea with the suggestions of converting it to a public park, and it was consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plans. A large part of the property was in the Drainage Overlay and the rezoning would prevent construction.

Ms. Scott said the recommendation would be included as a single memo from both the Parks and Parkways and Planning and Zoning Commissions. Ms. Sica suggested discussing complaints of the property appearing as if it was public property with a rope. It was put to keep the trucks off the property, but it was also keeping people off the property. There was also an area that one of neighbors cleared and treated it as if it was their yard. The City should do some maintenance.

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Ms. Scott said the ordinance included the legal description as well as the cash sale from the City purchase. The zoning went to the center line of the street and the City owned Monroe Street. Ms. Crosby asked how to better maintain the area as an inviting park with benches and the availability for fishing. She asked if the commission could recommend this become part of the Public Works maintenance program. Ms. Clark said part of the protection was that it was wild. The bollards were installed to prevent trucks and it was suggested placing bollards down the north and south side to give recognition. Ms. Scott suggested creating a plan. It was used for years as a neighborhood park. Ms. Crosby asked if the commission should look at it now or in the next year's budget as part of the recommendation. Ms. Scott suggested installing a small fence on the north side to delineate the line with the neighbor. Ms. Frederick suggested a boardwalk. Ms. Clark suggested plant identification.

Mr. McQuiston suggested a recommendation of changing the zoning to Open Space. Mr. Discon said it was not maintained and people wanted to buy it.

Ms. Crosby moved to recommend adoption of Ordinance 19-01 to rezone Pottery Hill to Open Space, have a plan developed with insights from the Parks and Parkways Commission to develop a plan, maintain the property with it being included in the Public Works Departments maintenance schedule, with the intent to enhance the property into a park like setting, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved.

Ms. Clark asked if made sense to identify other City properties for rezoning to Open Space. Ms. Scott said the inventory would be provided of the City owned open space and if they were used parks.

Ms. Fargason asked with the commission's recommendations and City demands on new construction, how did the Public Works Department accomplish projects with no input. Ms. Scott said with a grant it did not come from the Public Works Department. She recognized that the commission had not reviewed the plan. It was an engineered plan and the City Arborist had reviewed it. Ms. Fargason said there should be a commission discussion. Ms. Scott said this was not the only commission making that same request. Ms. Frederick said there was a continuance of no communication. She said all of the ditches and trees were removed by the proposed Port Marigny site. She asked what was happening to the green infrastructure. Ms. Clark asked about the ditch by the former Acadian Millworks with the wildflowers now being culverted. Ms. Scott said she was not aware of the project. Ms. Frederick said the commission was a voice for green infrastructure.

Ms. Crosby said when he was a Council Member, Mr. Burguieres had proposed the Parks and Parkways Commission have expanded duties. She asked Ms. Sica with the Open Space zoning change if verbiage could be established that open space be included under the Parks and Parkways Commission. Ms. Sica said it could be a possibility, but it would take time to establish it as a CLURO amendment. Mr. Discon asked how the CLURO change was established for the Historic District Commission. Ms. Scott said that commission was enabled through state law. The Planning Commission had certain authorities which included budget items to be reviewed in the Short Term Work Program as a state enabling legislation. The Parks and Parkways Commission now served at the discretion of the City Council as an advisory board. Mr. Discon said the commission needed to pursue these changes. He suggested establishing a subcommittee to create verbiage and present it to the City Council.

Adoption of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Fargason nominated Mr. Discon as Chairman, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved.

Ms. Crosby nominated Mr. McQuiston as Vice Chairman, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously approved.

Follow up on tree giveaway

The tree giveaway was successful with giving away 600 trees in just over one hour. The commission suggested increasing the quantity with an additional species for a total of 700 trees. Ms. Scott said the more species the better. It was decided to review the available tree list around October.

Florida Street Streetscape

Ms. Osborne said Pelican Athletic Club agreed to planting two trees in the big field and she would get the form this week. Ms. Casanova had obtained the contact information for the post office. Mr. Discon said Council Member Madden would propose the commission put together a project for the K Mart center to enhance the entrance. Ms. Scott said it was private property. The commission thought this was a nice planting in that area. Ms. Scott said if it was in Highway 22 there could be an agreement with DOTD, but the City could not encroach onto private property.

Ms. Crosby asked about LSU being given the Copeland property in Mariner's Village. Ms. Scott did not know anything else. The marina would be reworked and not be eliminated. She understood it would be a retirement center.

Marigny Avenue Edible Forest

Ms. Scott said the staff was waiting on Cleco and would provide a timeline to have the Public Works Department come behind Cleco for the remaining tree removal. The trees species were modified. Cleco had talked about the removal in February. When Cleco provided the dates, the City would order the trees.

Ms. Clark asked when the corners live oak trees were to be planted. Ms. Crosby asked if the live oak trees on Marigny Avenue would be bagged for mitigation or reminding the homeowners to water. Ms. Casanova said the City would need a separate maintenance plan for watering and there was no agreement with homeowners. Ms. Crosby suggested establishing a watering agreement with the homeowner. Mr. Discon suggested ordering and planting the live oak trees dealing with the water bags as the trees were planted.

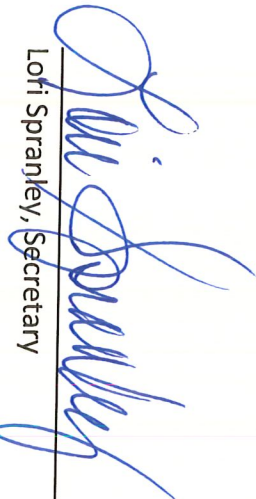
Ms. Crosby asked about water availability on the Marigny Avenue median. Ms. Casanova said there was existing water and the City would create irrigation.

Staff update

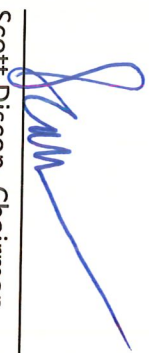
- Rose garden – would the City be removing the boxwoods? Mr. McQuiston did not have time to measure the area. It was agreed it should be replanted in the fall, but explore more options on what to plant. The garden should have a layer of manure and mulched.
- Cemetery – Ms. Scott said the City was working on drainage in that area.
- Causeway – Ms. Scott would speak with Dana Brown about making a presentation to the City Council and reduce the cost of the project.
- Tyler Thomas – Ms. Casanova said she was researching availability for the citrus plants. It was suggested to call Becnels since they usually had citrus trees.
- West Beach Parkway – Ms. Scott said Franklin Kyle was finalizing the plan and would forward it to the commission. Then the planting would begin.

Ms. Clark said her term had expired, and she had spoken with Will Affon about becoming a commissioner. He said he would email his resume to the Mayor and he would be listed as a qualifier.

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



Lori Spranley, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman
Parks and Parkways Commission