

Parks and Parkways Commission May 21, 2018

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

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Louise Scott, Planning Director; Catherine Casanova, Landscape Inspector; and Council Members Laure' Sica, David Ellis and Mayor Donald Villere

Discussion of the proposed Landscape Plan, maintenance and Cleco requirements for the Marigny Avenue "Edible Forest"

Ms. Scott presented that the project began with trees in Marigny Avenue median being located under the power lines. The City wanted to clean up the area and produce a nice project on the City's namesake street. Ms. Crosby, Mr. Discon, Ms. Casanova, and Ms. Scott met with Cleco who was adamant about the height of the proposed trees being under 20'. Cleco at one time had offered money for replanting, but that may not be available.

There were a few resident comments on the proposal. The staff had requested an estimated maintenance costs from RCI who provided all other maintenance for City projects. The preliminary estimate for the entire 8 blocks was \$54,000. The entire project cost was \$45,000 and the staff had estimated \$15,000 for maintenance and watering. The commission requested City Council input for budgetary purposes and to determine how to move forward on the project. Mayor Villere said a budget must be considered for the entire City as there were flower beds, especially on Heavens Drive, that were not included in the maintenance cost. He agreed with moving forward on the tree replacement on Marigny Avenue, but not on any other new planting projects.

Ms. Crosby said the Heavens Drive bed was a Keep Mandeville Beautiful project. Mr. Discon said the Heavens Drive project should be included in the Parks and Parkways line item in the budget. The commission had been working on the Marigny Avenue project and he understood the cost was high. He also suggested the City purchase a water truck and hire a high school student to water the plantings. Ms. Clark asked if there was a comparison of the cost of a water truck and irrigation systems. Ms. Scott said irrigation was a constant maintenance issue. Ms. Clark asked how many years of irrigation would it take to pay for a water truck.

Mr. McQuiston said an irrigation system was destined to fail and required constant maintenance. They usually failed within 1-2 years of installation between the roots, the mowers running it, and vehicles driving over the median. He suggested the installation of a micro irrigation system with a valve and drip emitters on the trees that was less prone to damage, but it would still need maintenance. It would be less costly to replace plastic tubing than piping.

There was a discussion about the location of a faucet on Highway 190 at Marigny Avenue and the placement of a hose on each block for watering. Part of the maintenance cost was watering. It was suggested to install timers on the hoses. The problem was the 8 weeks in July and August that would need supplemental watering. After two years, the trees were established and they should not need additional watering. The planting would be native species as much as possible to grow in the environment. The maintenance estimate was based on 38 session services per year. Ms. Casanova suggested a reduction to 26 service sessions, and Mr. McQuiston suggested a reduction to 19 service sessions. The maintenance after two years would not be a reoccurring cost unless there was replanting. There was a discussion that there would be other plants that would require watering.

Ms. Frederick said mulching was the first priority with natural fertilization and there would be less grassing growing around the trees. Ms. Crosby said the commission would like Cleco to chip the trees on site for mulch to be used instead of purchasing other natural materials.

Ms. Clark said salt tolerant plants must be considered in the 100 block being close to the lake and blueberries were salt tolerant as well as being disease resistant. Ms. Frederick said species would be used that would not need insecticides. It was discussed to reduce the number of lime trees while they were beautiful, they but not always blooming. Mayor Villere suggested apple trees which were included on the plan. Ms. Crosby said different varieties were suggested because they could cross pollenate. Pineapple guava trees required two trees within a certain distance for pollination. Her trees attracted turtles so there was other wildlife. Mr. McQuiston asked about the ground plain since pineapple guava needed drainage. Ms. Clark said the 100 block was low and curbed. Mr. McQuiston said Ms. Crosby did a good job on the plan, but with maintenance being an issue suggested planting a block at a time. He also suggested installing a 1' mower strip border to prevent the mower from hitting the plants. Ms. Frederick asked if the strip would hinder the fruit picking and it was answered that it would not be a hindrance.

Mr. Discon said when they walked the project there was a discussion of planting live oak trees at the intersections. Ms. Scott said the commission had heard from some of the residents a desire to have a tree canopy and the live oak trees would anchor the corners. These trees were not part of the proposed budget and could be planted through the Street Tree Program. Ms. Frederick said it would be a repeating pattern.

There was a concern about mowing around the trees. The mower strip would be in isolated areas and poured on site. It would be an initial expense, but it would become a protected area. This would also create defined areas for mulching and easier maintenance.

Ms. Crosby said the Monroe Street planting was in a defined spot and was an example of a good planting area. It was also an example of a mower strip, was mulched regularly and could be used as a guide. It was discussed that there were triangle ends on Marigny Avenue and it was suggested to use 10" concrete edges with pollinating plants that would stay low for visibility. It would be the idea of repeating plants down the streets.

Ms. Scott said the City did not want to create more planting beds. Mayor Villere suggested starting with the tree planting. The other suggestions were planting three groups per street, one or two sections to start, or planting one block, get feedback, and learn from it for any adjustments in the future planting. Beginning the planting at the highway would be a starting point because there were fewer residences, was a more commercial corridor, was less attractive, and it could have a huge impact. Mayor Villere asked to plant one block on each end. Ms. Frederick and Ms. Crosby said it would look hodgepodge and suggested planting three blocks. It was decided that Monroe to Livingston Streets would be a good area since there were only scrub trees to be removed.

The plan was discussed to be a fall/winter planting project. When Cleco cut the trees, the mulch would be stored off site as a compost area for future planting. Mr. Discon said no one would want to see the area bare so he also suggested planting the anchor live oak trees.

Council Member David Ellis agreed with the need to keep the maintenance costs down and he would like to see the upfront costs with the concrete. Ms. Scott said the concrete could be installed now keeping the planting within the proposed cost for this year. Mayor Villere said the staff would work on a firm maintenance cost for the next two years with a reduction of

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service sessions. Mr. Ellis said Metairie had similar problems and solutions with the end result being an increase in property values. He did not want to burden the citizens in tight times having landscape monies cut.



Public Art had been a discussion in the last few years under the overpass. Ms. Clark suggested a statue of Marigny on the Marigny Avenue median. It was also suggested repositioning the existing Louisiana historic marker.

Council Member Laure' Sica liked the planting idea, but was worried about being over budget. She agreed as a start to plant three blocks. Ms. Frederick said there would be less maintenance with the main idea being mulching and pruning with a more sustainable garden that would invite the residents. Ms. Crosby said the commission had been asked why plant an edible garden and they thought it was becoming more vogue for children to know where their food came from. The commission hoped the schools would go there as field trips and it would be educational. It would be a "do good" thing for the community and people would be able to taste a fresh grown fruit.

Mr. McQuiston said lawns were not native, and diversity in the form of clover helped the environment be sustainable. Ms. Crosby said if people did not pick the fruit, it could be donated to the food bank. Mr. McQuiston agreed it was an educational opportunity that must be attractive.

In conclusion, it was decided:

- Plant the 100, 300 and 800 blocks of Marigny Avenue
- Finalize the drawings with a quote for cement curbing as a mow edge
- Mr. McQuiston would work with the commission members to finalize the plan
- Pursue options for maintenance
- Group the plantings together and obtain estimates
- If the cost was higher than anticipated, reduce the planting down to two blocks
- Work with Cleco to have the trees removed during the summer so the trees could be planted in the winter
- Have Cleco work with the Public Works Department about storing the chipping from the trees
- Consider a nurse tree for a tree sanctuary. There were concerns of a safety hazard with a section of a rotting tree.




Mr. Ellis asked for a breakout of any other projects. Ms. Scott said a break out of all projects and costs was included with the budget. Mr. Ellis was concerned about maintenance for the Heavens Drive garden. Ms. Scott said it was not under contract because Keep Mandeville Beautiful had committed to maintaining it. Mayor Villere said it should be replanted for a good appearance and then place it under contract.

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

