

Parks and Parkways Commission January 9, 2017

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

Present: Nancy Clark, Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Anne Marie Fargason, Maggie Gleason, and Richard Adamiak

Absent: Karin Lorenz Crosby

Also Present: Louise Scott, Planning Director and Catherine Casanova, Landscape Inspector and Council Member Mike Pulaski

Ms. Clark moved to adopt the minutes of November 7, 2016, seconded by Ms. Frederick and was unanimously approved.

Presentation and Discussion about St. Tammany Cypress Tree Planting project and other local projects by Mike Cambre and Tom Aicklen

Tom Aicklen presented that he was working in the Big Branch Marsh site when the cypress forest was clear cut except for the area between the PreStressed site and the lakefront. The restoration project was approved in 2007 with \$21M of funding in 2008 for marsh improvement and shoreline stabilization. With the restoration project, the salinity problem had been solved. He had received a grant through the Office of Tourism from the Federal Highway Administration to create heritage corridors and theme trails. The Choctaw Nature Trail, Bartram Heritage Trail, Iberville Trail and America's Wetland Birding Trails were established. One trail was located in Lacombe and another one is located in Bogalusa. The group was looking for another site in Mandeville and thought the Pottery Oak area would be a good location with 3.5 acres preserved for natural use. The point of Bayou Castain was identified as a spot to plant cypress trees. The Green Fund property and Neighborhoods were also identified sites for cypress tree planting. The intent was to focus on creating living memorials with cypress trees. Another project would be a live oak alley along the Trace, but to date they had not been successful in obtaining the money. When Mr. Cambre said he wanted to plant cypress trees, Mr. Aicklen thought it would be a good partnership. There would be five participating communities from Madisonville to Pearl River and each memorial would be dedicated to one of the five people from Louisiana killed in the 9/11 attack on America.

Mr. Aicklen said he had won the Gulf Guardian award in 2004. He was hoping to work with the schools or other organizations in Adopting a Spot for an ongoing project and install pride of place and purpose. Mr. Cambre had spoken with Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser who supported the project and agreed to plant the first tree. Ms. Clark asked what the memorial would look like recognizing the victims of 9/11. Mr. Aicklen said there would be small signage with the names of the five people from Louisiana.

Mr. Aicklen presented additional information on the scenic byways and nature trails:

America's Scenic Byways were developed as birding trails within the concept since 1991. The method was corridors and trails to promote them for ecological tourism. There were a few provisions such as signage, safety, traffic which were incidental.

Themed Trails – the North America and Canada Bluebird Trail were also included. They were Alligator to Apollo for space, science and technology.

Choctaw Nature Trail followed the Tammany Trace and Highway 190 to establish a linear museum without walls. It was an area where people were already congregating. There were displays about heritage, culture, and ecology in several languages. Mr. Aicklen would like to make it interactive in the future.

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The Pottery Oak area would be Mandeville's Heritage site. He also suggested that the lakefront and the Tammany Trace would be good areas to continue a blue way trail. William Bartram established the Bartram Wilderness Adventure and Resource Restoration Trail which was instrumental in science and cultural observation of the Indian nation. A Louisiana society was established in Louisiana in 2007.

America's Wetland Birding Trail/North American Bluebird Trail was established in 2006. In every state but Louisiana it was a big trail. Mr. Aicklen had provided 10 sites in St. Tammany and none were identified.

9/11 Live Oak Living Memorial – there was no funding for this project and until then the cypress planting was a first priority. Initially the Pottery Oak was the most logical location since it was 1 ½ blocks from the Trace and located on 3.5 acres. Mr. Aicklen thought it would be an ideal adopt a spot for Mandeville high school students. Mr. Adamiak asked for a cost estimate for the live oak planting. Mr. Aicklen said each tree could cost \$50 or could be donated. He wanted to include in the project Starc participants to help educate them on planting and maintenance. Each live oak would also have a memorial plaque for each person that died on 9/11.

Mr. Discon asked about a hole in the path. Mr. Aicken said there was 520 miles designated and they were developing sites. Mr. Discon said the live oak alley could be part of the program. Mr. Cambre said the cypress planting could begin in the next 6-8 weeks. He said Mr. Aicklen was a great resource. They had discussed the project with Mayor Villere and Edward Deano who represented the Green Fund and they were both in agreement on the project. Mr. Cambre said the plan for the Green Fund property would be a grove amongst the bulkhead. The Pottery Oak area would be the most logical place. Ms. Clark said for the board to make a recommendation they would need to know how many trees would be planted at each spot, what would be the volunteer need and proposed signage. Mr. Discon said identifying the locations was a priority. Mr. Cambre said it could be at any other public space. Ms. Clark thought coming off of the Tammany Trace you would be pointing to the Pottery Oak which would be a winning solution with great accessibility. Mr. Aicklen said it was also accessible by boat. Mr. Cambre said each planting season, the project would be continued.

Ms. Clark moved based on the presentation to recommend the City participating in the Trails program and in identifying locations. Mr. Discon suggested using fund from the board's budget for signage. Mr. Discon seconded the motion. Mr. Aicklen said they needed consent to develop the project. There were seedlings available for the Pottery Oak site. Mr. Cambre said they would need funds for additional cypress trees. He had work groups to plant. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cambre presented his vision was to plant cypress trees and Mr. Aicklen wanted to establish an oak tree revival. They felt it would be a good partnership. They had chosen five sites in the area to plant cypress seedlings on public lands for future generations. He would be the project manager for volunteers on tree planting days. He had received a donation of 500 trees and his goal was to plant 15,000 trees.

Adoption of 2017 minutes

Ms. Fargason moved to adopt the 2017 meeting dates, seconded by Ms. Clark and was unanimously

Relocation of crepe myrtles on Monroe Street

Ms. Casanova said the crepe myrtles on Monroe Street by Massena and Kleber Streets must be relocated due to drainage improvements in the area. Andre Monnot, City Engineer, made the relocation request. The project would take too long to store and

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replant the trees as well as budgeting for a contractor to replant after completion. The drainage work would take place during the summer, but the trees would be relocated during this planting cycle. Ms. Casanova suggested moving the trees to other planting sites along Monroe Street. Ms. Gleason suggested using the Parish's tree digger, and the Public Works Department could then replant them. There was a discussion that there were no water taps on Monroe Street at this time. It was also discussed that the area of Marigny Avenue and Highway 190 needed trees and that location should be considered as an alternate site with a hose bib already installed.

Florida Street landscaping

Mr. Discon said only one application had been submitted, but there was no place to plant the tree. It was suggested to remove the concrete, but it would be up to the owner since it would be their expense and a review would be needed that they were not removing required parking. Mr. Discon suggested the board visit with the business and encourage the program. Ms. Scott said it would be agreeable for the board to talk to the businesses. Mr. Discon said Saia's had the same asphalt problem and he would speak with Mr. Copeland about taking up concrete for the tree locations.

Rose Garden adoption update

Ms. Casanova said Keep Mandeville Beautiful had not finalized the contract. She was working with them about the City requirements. It must be reviewed by Mr. Deano and basic language could be developed to start the process. It would be similar to the Adopt A Spot program. Ms. Casanova said the applicant did not want signage, but that should be reviewed for future locations. Mr. Discon said signage could promote other spots being adopted. Ms. Fargason asked why there was Keep Mandeville Beautiful signage on the trash cans, and it was answered that their organization had purchased the cans through a grant.

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City and the Causeway Commission/East and West Causeway Approach plantings

Ms. Scott said an agreement was received that afternoon. It would be forwarded to the Causeway Commission for execution. Mayor Villere requested waiting until after Mardi Gras for the planting so they would not be trampled with the parades.

The project was to plant 150 trees. Ms. Casanova said Wildlife and Fisheries would allow planting along the electric poles by the Bayou Chinchuba bridge with the agreement that the City would remove all of the tallow trees in the area. There was a requirement of a plan for their approval. Mr. Discon suggested planting that area at the same time as the crepe myrtles. There was a discussion of clustering cypress trees and evergreen with examples of native or savannah holly which required wet feet. The board had a consensus of planting cypress trees with approximately five trees per pole.

Causeway Sculpture Garden submittal criteria

Mr. Discon said he had met with Mr. Dufrechou about the maintenance program and was told the project would be finished by Christmas 2017. Mr. Dufrechou liked the concept of a Celebration of Water and trees in a sculpture garden. It was suggested drawing the plans now with approval by the Causeway Commission for a January 1, 2018 start date.

Ms. Clark said the board would require professions for this project with the location being high visibility. There was a discussion about reallocating funds from the cemetery and Marigny Avenue line items to this project.

Ms. Scott suggested a public hearing be held on this project to let the public know about the idea. Ms. Clark suggested pulling in the St. Tammany Art Association. Mr. Discon suggested identifying the planting and then hold a public hearing on the art. There was a discussion about whether the art would be permanent, if there would be some pieces on loan or a mixture of both. Ms. Scott agreed that the first step was to develop the landscape plan and look for artists to talk to the board. The name of the artist that had previously discussed art with the board would be researched.

Lakeshore Drive oak tree Christmas tree lighting for 2017

Mr. Discon suggested soliciting businesses to adopt trees to light the lakefront. Ms. Clark said in the past when there were trees light there were also small signs at the base of the tree naming the sponsor. Mr. Discon suggested meeting with OMBa and Cleco. Ms. Frederick said she would prefer small white lights and not the sailboats that had previously been lit up.

Cemetery

Ms. Clark said she and Ms. Casanova had met and discussed many items. She reported that the bamboo was still standing. The interior well was maintained with random planting. Johnny Mayronne had previously prepared a plan and it was requested to have Mr. Mayronne update the plan.

Ms. Clark said she had visited four cemeteries in old Alabama which even as small towns had a beautiful historic marker. She suggested creating a marker for Mandeville. Ms. Scott suggested nominating the cemetery to the Historic Register.

Staff Update

- The chain was on order for the Pottery Oak and 1/3 of it had been received. Mr. Discon was concerned that the chain would be too heavy for the 4 x 4 post and suggested changing the posts to 6 x 6 to look natural. It was decided if the posts appeared too small when the chains was installed then the posts would be changed.
- A date must be determined for Arbor Day to provide a date for shipping. It was decided to ask Ms. Beakley if either January 28th and February 4th were open dates.
- There were presently 76 street tree applications for a total of 147 trees of planting. The planting season would soon be over and a third phase of trees had been ordered. Ms. Clark asked to send a Press Release to let the citizens know this was an annual program, how many trees were planted and that this year's program was closing.
- Florida Street ground cover plan must be stamped for DOTD.

Ms. Fargason reported there were two clothing bins that had appeared and were located at the WalMart Neighborhood Market and Kmart.

Mr. Adamiak and John Crane had cleaned and filled the Bunny Trail to Laftte Street. The area by the Kierr Garden property was boggy. There was a discussion about creating a boardwalk to the higher part of the ground or to the picket fence at the back of Lang House and let the area be natural. Ms. Casanova said the grass cutters were told not to bring the mowers in that area. Mr. Adamiak said it was totally underwater. Ms. Scott said she would pursue the boardwalk with Mr. Adamiak stating it would be about 100'. Stepping stones was another suggestion and it was agreed to be a better suggestion. Ms. Gleason said she

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trip hazard. The question was handicap accessibility. Mr. Adamiak said there was a handicap ramp being constructed with the restrooms. The budget included \$15,000 in that line item for planting. Mr. Adamiak asked about signage to the bunny trail similar or the Lang House. It was agreed to install 2" concrete stones that resembled brick pavers measuring 24" x 24".

Ms. Frederick expressed her concern about the construction near City Hall being clear cut. She asked how to preserve the native shrubs. Ms. Scott said the trees in the greenbelt were dead. Ms. Casanova said there were trees being saved on the side and the rear. Ms. Frederick asked for the installation of an island of native shrubs.

Mr. Discon said the Rouse's site on East Causeway did a great job of preservation in the greenbelt. Ms. Gleason suggested amending the greenbelt language to be more compatible with the buffer zone language and decreasing the tree size from 6" to 3" required to be saved. The fastest way to move any changes forward would be to send a recommendation to the Council regarding an ordinance to be introduced to amend the CLURO. Ms. Frederick felt the businesses would continue to buy the property with the changes. Ms. Frederick said the board set the standards and the businesses must comply.

The board decided that there would be a draft resolution sent to the board members for review and approval at the February meeting. It might be easier to state over a certain diameter and the board would prefer all native species to be preserved. The board agreed to amend the greenbelt language to match the buffer zone language with no under brushing allowed. The B-3 zoning district would be excluded because the building usage could change between residential and commercial.


Mr. Discon asked about scheduling the educational class on how to cut trees.

Mr. Adamiak asked for a copy of the budget and short term work plan.

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



Lori Spranley, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman
Parks and Parkways Commission

