

Chairman Scott Discon called the meeting to order at 6:04pm

The secretary called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Will Afton, Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Shawn Potter, Shelley Winstead

Absent: Brien Croff, Christy Kervin (absent at roll call, present at 6:20)

Staff Present: Rad Dickson, Planner; Alex Weiner, Secretary; Tina Myers, Secretary

#### Minutes

Ms. Winstead made a motion to adopt the minutes from the November 6 meeting, Mr. Potter seconded, and all were in favor.

Mr. Discon said that they would move the North Causeway agenda item to the end to give time for Ms. Kervin to show up as she was involved with the designing of the project.

#### New Business

##### **Tree Drought Death on Public and Private Property**

Mr. Discon said that he has gotten calls from residents in the Sanctuary. People notice dead trees and he suggested maybe creating a new policy or procedure. He suggested adding something to the water bills or something to remind residents. Mr. Afton said that he has also gotten calls.

Ms. Frederick said that trees get stressed, and asked if they should wait until spring. Mr. Afton said that brown evergreen trees are bad, but brown deciduous trees are a wait and see scenario.

Mr. Dickson said that if this is getting put on the water bill it will need to be timed. Winter may be too late.

Mr. Discon said there should still be a note added, and it should include that a permit is needed for any removals. He suggested that the City could go out to confirm it needs to be removed. He asked if inspections were being done on Public Trees.

Mr. Dickson said that residents will call and someone will go out and take a look.

Ms. Frederick asked if a homeowner had no money for removal if the City would help subsidize. Mr. Dickson said that he has not seen that happen before.

Mr. Afton asked what the procedure was to report a dead tree on public property. Mr. Dickson said to call the Planning Department and they will send someone out.

Buck Abbey, 1129 Villere: People do not know if a tree is alive or dead, and may not know for 2-3 years. The City should just issue an announcement saying to expect damage to trees due to weather. A phone number should be given to provide and there should be something included that says the private sector is available as well. The public should be educated.

Mr. Discon suggested a slogan could be added to the water bill. Ms. Winstead said that she notices bold letters on the bills. Mr. Potter said they could do something like "damage expected, call before you cut".

Mr. Discon said that most tree cutters do it on the weekends without a permit. Ms. Frederick said that you can call the non-emergency police line to inquire if they have a permit.

#### **Public Comment**

Danielle Fealko, 200 W Thistle: She was here representing Wild Ones. They had their end of year review meeting and will continue to educate the public on native vs non-native plants. They are

also looking to strengthen their relationship with other organizations. Currently they cover Washington and Tangipahoa Parishes. They hosted events at local nurseries and will continue to work on youth outreach at schools.

Ms. Winstead said they could be part of the pollinator event. Ms. Fealko said they would love to be a part of it.

Mr. Discon asked if there was a date picked for the event yet, Ms. Frederick said there was not. Ms. Winstead said they could do that now. Mr. Weiner said it would have to be advertised as the commission would be voting on something so it could be placed on the January agenda.

#### **North Causeway Service Road Landscape Project**

Ms. Kervin said she is still working to see if they can plant some trees in the area. The hope is that they would be able to plant some short trees that do not interfere with the powerlines. She may reach out to DOTD.

Mr. Dickson suggested reaching out to the Causeway commission. He said there is also something to be said about vitex and crape myrtles. Ms. Kervin said that there was some spruce pine on N Causeway.

Mr. Discon said the idea is to mimic what is on the other side of the service road. Those trees should be submitted and see if they get approved.

Mr. Dickson said he noticed areas where compaction is a problem. This is something to keep in mind when re-doing an area. He suggested maybe breaking up the soil or having a soil amendment done. Mr. Afton said he would agree with that.

Mr. Discon said to ask if changes to the swale were planned. Mr. Dickson said it is a narrow spot.

Mr. Discon asked if spruce pines could be here. Ms. Kervin said that she could not guarantee they would not get tall eventually. If they went closer to the highway they could stay away from the powerlines.

Ms. Frederick asked if Ms. Kervin could talk about what was designed. Ms. Kervin said she had spruce pine, fringe trees, yaupon. She removed palmettos as there was no canopy. There was some discussion about grasses. She would do those at the end of the areas as they are expensive. It is mainly trees and lose shrubs.

Mr. Discon said the trees originally pitched got denied, they should try to push some boundaries.

Mr. Afton asked if there was a list provided by the Causeway Commission. Ms. Kervin said that Mr. Dickson sent something. Mr. Dickson said that was an old document that he had found. Mr. Discon said to ask and let them say no.

Ms. Frederick said she loved eastern red cedar and asked if it would not grow well. Mr. Afton said that it would do better in a dryer climate. Ms. Kervin said that it grew more upland. She added that the other side did not have any so it was not considered.

Mr. Discon said to try palmettos and pines. Ms. Kervin said she would also think about cypress.

Mr. Dickson asked if cypress did well with topping. Mr. Afton said they could recuperate better, but it should not be done. Mr. Dickson said if anything gets too close to the lines then it will be topped.

Ms. Winstead asked if there was a contact with the Causeway Commission. Mr. Discon said to call and set a meeting with him, Ms. Winstead, and Mr. Dickson. This way they can meet in person and present what they want to do.

**Public Comment**

Buck Abbey, 1129 Villere: There was a 100% vote for every potential topic listed for the landscape summit. He has heard from one of the guest speakers. The tentative date is January 24<sup>th</sup>. The mayor said it will start at 5:00pm or 6:00pm. It will be informative. Parks and Parkways is the sponsor of the event. It will be livestreamed.

Bonnie Abbey, She spoke with the mayor about the regular meetings being livestreamed. People will listen. She said that Mr. Weiner was looking into it. Mr. Discon said that Mr. Potter was also looking into it.

Ms. Kervin asked what time it would be. Mr. Abbey said 5:00pm or 6:00pm. Mr. Afton said the last summit was good.

**Staff Update**

Mr. Discon said there is irrigation on the Pine Savanna site. The burn is scheduled for the first half of January. The link to view the tree inventory was sent to Mr. Discon and Ms. Kervin and can be shared with others as well. All of the grant money was used and there is talk about continuing with the City budget.

Ms. Kervin said she hopes to turn this into a tree management plan.

Mr. Afton asked what the completion percentage was. Mr. Discon said it was about 20%. It is easier to see on the map.

Mr. Discon said the Palmetto Garden was the same thing as the N Causeway area. It was originally called the Palmetto Garden as the idea was palmettos and pines.

Ms. Frederick asked if after the burn they would acquire and plant the longleaf pines. Mr. Dickson said the closest source is in Florida. They could do 5-10 of a bigger size, or 100 of a small size to plant after the burn.

Ms. Frederick asked why not have all be large. Mr. Dickson said it was a sourcing issue.

Mr. Discon asked how many Ms. Frederick wanted. Ms. Frederick said 10-12.

Mr. Dickson said he was worried about compaction in the area. Ms. Frederick said it was good. Mr. Dickson said that the City Landscape Architect had some issues with the site.

Ms. Frederick asked if Jess Cole could be brought on to manage. Mr. Dickson said he brought it up, but the other guy is already under contract. Ms. Frederick said that he was only doing the burn. Ms. Cole could do the maintenance.

Ms. Winstead asked if the guy doing the burn could drill some holes throughout the area. Mr. Dickson said he was not sure that was something that could be done. Ms. Frederick said that there are bulbs planted that will be destroyed if the area is tilled.

Mr. Afton said it was not realistic to find large container grown pines. He suggested going with what they found and at the size they came in.

Mr. Dickson asked if they were opposed to getting a tray. Mr. Discon said to get normal sized trees.

Mr. Discon asked why the commission could not plant the trees? They could order them and hopefully get them within a month.

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Ms. Frederick said to get what they can get. 10-12 was to be sufficient. She would like to get Jess Cole to come back and get on board. She wanted to know what the burn contract was. Mr. Dickson said he would get with Ms. Bartholomew about it.

Ms. Kervin asked who the landscape inspector was. Mr. Dickson said it was himself and Mr. Weiner. Mr. Discon asked who did what. Mr. Dickson said he did commercial reviews, and Mr. Weiner did residential reviews.

Mr. Afton asked if this was something temporary or if it was part of their everyday responsibilities. Mr. Dickson said it was every day.

Mr. Discon said that Madisonville recently enacted an ordinance where, for example, if you plant 40 trees and 20 of them die, you have to replace the ones that died. He asked if the City went out did follow-up inspections. Mr. Dickson said there is typically no follow-up inspection.

Ms. Kervin said that inspections pass, and then the plants die later. It is up to the City and the property owner to be sure to maintain.

Mr. Dickson said he is not sure what the catch would be to force compliance. Mr. Discon said they will find the language.

Ms. Frederick said they cannot continue to lose trees. Ms. Kervin said there is no pressure for the inspectors.

Ms. Frederick asked if there was a replacement clause in the ordinance? Mr. Discon said he just saw the implementation in Madisonville. He would find the language to put it into place.

Ms. Frederick said they are letting developers cut down trees and not replant.

Ms. Kervin motioned to add this to the next meeting agenda. Ms. Winstead seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Buck Abbey, 1129 Villere: The City is losing canopy. Landscape Architects require trees to be living one year later. This works for commercial development, not so much for residential development. There needs to be a landscape architect on staff. If trees are not planted properly or maintained they will die. The problem is the soil. There has to be good planting beds. Someone needs to be looking at the landscape and assisting private landscaping when available.

Ms. Winstead asked what Mr. Abbey would recommend for the pine savanna site. Mr. Abbey said he recommended to buy seedlings in the past, but nothing came of it. He said he did not know if the company he previously dealt with still had seedlings, but would check.

Ms. Kervin said the Parish inspects the soil for planting, and asked if the City did the same thing. Mr. Dickson said the City does not do soil inspections. Ms. Kervin said the Parish does, and if there are rocks they will not approve the planting.

Mr. Discon said if the Parish does it the City should as well.

Mr. Abbey said they should add soil reports as well. The LSU Ag Center takes samples.

Ms. Winstead asked if Mr. Abbey could follow up on the seedlings and let Mr. Dickson know if they were available, and if they are to get them. Mr. Discon asked if the commission is ok with seedlings. Ms. Frederick said to get 3 gallons sized. Mr. Discon said to get 20 and they could plant and stake them. The soil should be lose after the burn. The commission could plant them.

Mr. Weiner reminded the commission to complete their yearly training.

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Ms. Winstead asked if there was an update on the W Causeway project. Mr. Discon said they were getting ready to order the trees.

Ms. Frederick asked about the trees to be planted to replace what was lost in the park behind City Hall. Mr. Discon asked what the selection was. Ms. Kervin said that they had not gotten that far yet.

Mr. Discon said he would need the list for the next meeting to know what to order. Ms. Frederick said there was talk about ID cards or be planted in packs.

Ms. Kervin said there was a new sidewalk that is bare that could use some planting.

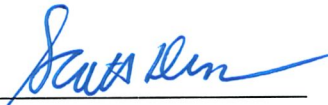
Mr. Discon said Ms. Frederick, Ms. Kervin, and Ms. Winstead to get the trees to order and give them to Mr. Dickson. Ms. Winstead said she would be fine with any selection.

Mr. Weiner introduced Ms. Myers and said that she would be filling in for him in the upcoming year.

Mr. Afton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm, seconded by Ms. Winstead and was unanimously approved.



Alex Weiner, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman  
Parks and Parkways Commission