

Parks and Parkways Commission

April 1, 2024

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Chairman Scott Discon called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

The secretary called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Will Afton, Scott Discon, Lee Frederick, Christy Kervin, Shelley Winstead

Absent: Brien Croff, Shawn Potter

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

Minutes

Ms. Winstead made a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 5 meeting, Ms. Kervin seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business

Election of Vice Chair

Ms. Kervin nominated Ms. Winstead to serve as Vice Chair, Ms. Frederick seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mr. Discon said he has sat in on the meetings. All the parks and recreation areas of the City have been identified.

Mr. Discon said the company is out of New Orleans and seems to be a good fit for the City.

Ms. Frederick said that there was a big masterplan for City Park going on as well.

Ms. Kervin asked if the commission would get copies of the plan. Mr. Discon said he would assume it is posted on the City website. Mr. Dickson said he would email the commission any files the City had.

Ms. Kervin said it would be great if they could piggyback on the plan for the community tree plan, if they have compiled something.

Pollinator Event

Ms. Kervin moved to open the agenda to add the pollinator event, Mr. Afton seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Frederick said she has all the speakers slated with times. Mr. Discon asked if there would be any repeat speakers. Ms. Frederick said the guy from St. Josephs Abbey is coming back.

Ms. Frederick said the second speaker is Shae Thomas, who has a business in New Orleans called "What it Bees Like" and will be talking on native bees and hosting bee hives.

Number three is Dr. Craig Hood, the head of the biology and science department at Loyola and is an expert on bats. His talk will be on the importance of bats in the ecosystem. The fourth speaker is Caroline Wolf and will talk about hummingbirds. The fifth speaker is a company Swamp Fly and another company Will Garden LLC. They will talk about native landscaping and rewilding.

The sixth speaker will be Ginna Hoff who is with the Monarch Watch organization and will talk about five butterflies along with the Monarchs.

Ms. Frederick said she had everything organized for the flyer.

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Ms. Frederick said she organized a list of tables and vendors as well. There will be the Xerces Society, which is an invertebrate conservation organization. They will have things for the kids as well as the adults.

The Parks and Parkways Commission will have a table, along with Wild Ones. Chickadee Natives will also be coming back to sell native plants. Beaver's Abundance will be there again.

Mr. Dickson suggested reaching out to Jess Cole as well since she has a native nursery.

Ms. Frederick said that Pretty Flowers will be there selling native trees and shrubs. Barry Pierce will be there with a bug collection. Swamp Fly and Will Garden LLC will also have a table.

Mr. Discon said to put the speakers and tables on the flyer.

Ms. Frederick said the only problem last time was that people did not know about the speakers and when they were happening. She said she spoke with Alia Casborne who said that there will be a band who can make announcements for the speakers.

Ms. Frederick said that Mr. Dickson will get the PowerPoint equipment. Mr. Dickson asked if it was projected on a screen or wall. Mr. Discon said they have a screen.

Ms. Frederick said about 25 chairs and 20 tables would be needed. She wondered if Mr. Croff and Mr. Potter could welcome people to the event. Mr. Discon said he would get in touch with them.

Mr. Discon asked if there would be shirts. Mr. Dickson asked if there was a design from last year. Ms. Frederick said it was a flower and a bee. Mr. Discon said to make it cool.

Ms. Frederick said that a basket is needed for the seeds, and they need to be put in packages. Ms. Frederick asked if labels could be made. Mr. Dickson said he has handouts for the seed type and instructions.

Ms. Kervin said they might need more seed packets.

Ms. Frederick said that the free wildflower seeds should be added to the flyer.

Ms. Winstead said that a QR code could be added to the flyer to direct people to a webpage. Mr. Dickson asked if he would have to make a webpage. Mr. Discon said the code would link to a page. The code could also be reused for future events. Mr. Dickson asked what page it would link to. Mr. Discon said it could link to the Parks and Parkways page on the City website.

Mr. Afton suggested posting the speaker document with the times on the City website.

Ms. Frederick said to send the flyer to Alia Casborne as well and she will send it out.

Mr. Afton said that announcing the speakers is a good thing, but adding some directional signs would be good as well.

Mr. Discon suggested getting another banner for this year. Mr. Dickson said he would look for the previous banner as well. Mr. Discon suggested making the banner generic so it could be reused.

Ms. Winstead said the QR code could be on the banner as well.

Mr. Afton said his comment on directional signs was to alert people where the speakers were located.

Ms. Winstead said her idea for the banner would be "Parks and Parkways Pollinator Event" with a QR code that way it could be reused.

Ms. Frederick said the banner needs to be colorful.

Ms. Frederick said there is a spreadsheet with the old contacts, and asked if Mr. Dickson could update it with the new contacts.

Mr. Discon wanted to thank Mr. Dickson and Mr. Afton for working the seedling giveaway, and for Mr. Dickson's support at the City.

Staff Update

Seedling Giveaway

Mr. Dickson said that hundreds of seedlings were given away. They are out of persimmon and pawpaw, and are almost out of the sycamore. There is still the cypress, redbud, and oak. He will not be there next weekend so let him know if he needs to do anything to prepare for them. If there is any more newspaper it would be appreciated.

Ms. Frederick said she saved the brown paper from the amazon packages she got.

Mr. Dickson said he would drop everything off at the trailhead on Thursday. Mr. Discon said he would be there. Ms. Winstead and Ms. Kervin said they would be there as well.

Butterfly Garden

Mr. Dickson said there was a butterfly garden installed at City Hall by Swamp Fly. All nonnatives were removed and replaced with about 50 different species.

Irrigation

Mr. Dickson said he has been working with Alternative Services to get everything dialed in.

Longleaf Pine Savanna Site

Mr. Dickson said the installation has been completed. Twenty longleaf pines were planted, and Jess Cole spread seeds and plugs as well.

Mr. Discon asked if Mr. Dickson could talk about the seedling giveaway for the Wild Ones representative in the audience.

Mr. Dickson said that the City ordered 2000 seedlings and gave them away for free at the Trailhead. There are 1200 – 1400 seedlings left to give away. Mr. Discon said it is done every year. In the past it was one Saturday, but this year it is two weekends. It will be at the trailhead and they will be located by Lafitte St.

Ms. Winstead said seedlings were given away at the pollinator event last year, would that be done again this year. Ms. Kervin said it would be easy to put some in dirt.

Ms. Frederick said that next time the seedlings can be in a bucket with some dirt if they need more time to prepare.

Mr. Dickson said it should be two weekends for the future as well as the event has gotten bigger. It could be broken into different groups as well for the Commission.

Mr. Dickson said the giveaway would be at 8:00am for the setup, and then start at 9:00am and go until 1:00pm.

Re-Leaf Program

Mr. Dickson said that all the trees have been delivered and look great. They switched from 30 gallon to 15 gallons this year and they are big. Installation starts tomorrow.

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Public Comment

Bonnie Abbey, 1129 Villere: She had one suggestion for education. The CLURO mentions educating the public and if the commission started to do something every three months or so and get someone to speak. People just do not know about the Commission.

Ms. Winstead motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:48pm, seconded by Ms. Kervin and was unanimously approved.



Alex Weiner, Secretary



Scott Discon, Chairman
Parks and Parkways Commission