

MINUTES

BEAUTIFICATION AND TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2024

VIA ZOOM/IN PERSON

PRESIDING: Janet Kavanagh

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debi Ferrer, Janet Kavanagh, John Nelson, Chuck Gomez

ABSENT: Angel Drinkwine, Jon Chavers

Staff Liaison: Amie Ell, Staff Liaison

Also in attendance: Cindy Kever, Public Works

CALL TO ORDER

Kavanagh called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Amie Ell conducted roll call; Ferrer, Kavanagh, Nelson, Gomez present; Drinkwine, Chavers absent

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Nelson and seconded by Gomez to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 4 to 0; Nelson, Gomez, Ferrer, Kavanagh voting in favor; none opposed; Drinkwine, Chavers absent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Ferrer and seconded by Nelson to approve the October 7, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried 4 to 0; Ferrer, Nelson, Kavanagh, Gomez voting in favor; none opposed; Drinkwine, Chavers absent

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Update from Cindy—Public Works Assistance

Keever said she spoke to David Mills, Transportation Manager, about waiting to turn the water off at the end of the month at the Trevitt Triangle and Mills said he would work with the committee to get it turned off later but would like someone to remind him to make sure it doesn't get forgotten.

Kavanagh said it's good news for next year, but at this point the committee can't get plantings done this fall, but wonderful that it is flexible.

Keever stated the committee can proceed on a year-by-year basis, and Mills and his team are flexible and able to provide support with manpower or equipment as needed.

Kavanagh asked if this also includes Public Works handling the preparation, including adding the appropriate soil, conditioners, and planting.

Keever said they can handle the planting but will need someone to oversee that it is done in the correct locations.

Kavanagh asked if Public Works could also create a path on the Trevitt Triangle.

Keever said yes.

Kavanagh shared Patricia Gates, owner of Gates Gardening, mentioned she would be willing to supervise the committee's planting efforts, at a rate of \$75 per hour. Kavanagh added the city would be able to handle the remaining tasks.

Keever suggested the committee use pavers instead of gravel.

Gomez asked if the committee could receive input in advance regarding soil preparation requirements, so the city can handle the installation.

Kavanagh said yes because Gates wants to ensure the work is done correctly.

Update on Residential Tree Giveaway

Ferrer gave a summary of the Residential Tree Giveaway:

- Smooth process. Most participants arrived on the event day to pick up their trees.

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- Received some feedback on demonstration. Some attendees were already familiar with planting techniques. A pre-recorded video demo could be shared ahead of time, allowing for a more staggered pickup schedule.
- Need to have a check-in table, as people were coming in and grabbing their trees on their own. They knew what they wanted, but there weren't enough members to assist everyone, which made it overwhelming for the volunteers. A few people have volunteered to help with next year's tree giveaway.
- Had to deliver some trees, which may be necessary in the future for those unavailable on the event day. Maybe the committee will consider recruiting a dedicated volunteer delivery crew to assist with this.
- Some trees were temporarily stored and later picked up by their recipients. One participant decided against keeping their tree, which was quickly rehomed following outreach to interested individuals.
- Overall success. Despite minor challenges, all trees found appropriate homes, and recipients were pleased with the event.

Kavanagh asked if the event got any publicity.

Gomez said incorrect, he wrote up an article.

Ferrer said Gomez had gotten Nelson's name wrong and a couple of other details.

Gomez said he wrote a short article covering everyone involved in the Tree Beautification project. Though he's relatively new to it, he's embraced the tree giveaway. His submission, published in the CCC News, received a lot of positive feedback. The article included three photos and highlighted the difference between the committees tall, healthy trees and the struggling ones on main street, which made them look good. Some citizen names were edited out, but the coverage was good. He sent the article to the mayor and others.

Ell said to please follow the city policy and send any press release information to her first. As the Public Information Officer and City Clerk, she handles all city releases. She will write it up, send it back for the committee's review, and ensure it goes out on city letterhead with photo credits. She's done this for the Chair before.

The committee understood.

Kavanagh suggested the committee members who attended write down ideas on what could have been done better, so that way each year it gets better.

Gomez said he didn't find the event chaotic. He deals with crowds often, he felt the event was peaceful, docile, no pushing, or knocking anyone down. If people are a little put out having to sit

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through a demonstration that's a price, they pay to get a free \$200 tree. Does not have a problem forcing applicants to watch the tree demonstration.

Ferrer mentioned if the committee has some suggestions, they can send them to her and she will create a document with tips for next year.

### Cruise Ship Planter

Kavanagh asked the committee if they would want some plantings done in the fall or if it will be pushed back for the spring.

Ferrer said if they want bulbs it would need to be done now.

The committee discussed details of the work that will need to get done for the planter.

Keever asked if the soil for the planter would be part of the committee's budget.

Kavanagh said they were hoping the city would cover it.

The committee discussed the details of how much soil would be needed.

### Staff Liaison

Ell informed the committee Chris Dodson, CGCC Instructor, will be joining the November 4<sup>th</sup> Beautification & Tree committee meeting to discuss the tree plaques for the tree tour.

## DISCUSSION

### Beautification Grant for Downtown Businesses

Gomez suggested composing a statement for City Council approval for a Beautification Committee grant in spring 2025, offering up to \$500 per downtown business for planters, soil, and plants to enhance sidewalks. He proposed reimbursing businesses upon receipt submission, allowing them to purchase necessary materials themselves. Gomez emphasized the importance of larger pots to retain moisture in hot weather and proposed both a spring and fall grant cycle, supporting year-round blooms. He suggested this initiative would enhance downtown appeal and attract tourism, recommending up to 10-20 grants depending on demand.

Ferrer noted City Council approval may not be necessary if the committee stays within its \$10,000 budget for the year. They suggested allocating \$2,000 to \$3,000 for up to six grants of \$500 each. They recommended running the application through legal, as done previously with the tree grant, to ensure compliance.

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Kavanagh mentioned Gomez thought the city would give them money.

Ell suggested to start this initiative in the 2025-26 fiscal year, allowing it to be included in the budget request. If implemented this fiscal year, funding would need to come from the existing budget, aligning with the committee's strategic plan. A funding application process for nonprofits opens in late October, with applications due by January 31. These are reviewed by Council as part of the budget process beginning in late January or early February, with final approval by the Budget Committee in May. It was recommended to include this initiative in the strategic plan during the next review, possibly in January, to justify future funding requests. Additional funds for the 2024-25 fiscal year are likely unavailable as the budget is already set.

Kavanagh said the committee's first year, the budget for trees in their pilot project was \$5,000. The city is very supportive and doubled it to \$10,000 this year. If this year, within this budget, the pilot program goes well, we can request a higher budget next year and demonstrate the results.

Nelson said they also have data showing public interest—how many people would want this. Putting it out should generate many applications, and while they may need to turn some away, it will give a clear picture of demand.

The committee discussed the specifics regarding the grant amounts to be awarded.

Ferrer suggested a proposal, framing it as a pilot project for the year, offering grants of up to \$300. They can establish parameters in the application outlining what the grant covers and the materials they are expected to purchase. This approach allows business owners the flexibility to choose their own materials—like pots or other creative options—rather than limiting to specific items. And setting criteria for eligibility, similar to what was done with the tree grant, to ensure accountability and effective use of funds.

Nelson said the application should include any relevant codes, such as distance regulations, so applicants are aware of the limitations when planning their projects.

Ell added she reviewed the code for sidewalk furniture, which includes planters. There are numerous requirements regarding color and materials the committee needs to consider. She can send the relevant section of the code for review, as it categorizes items like tables, chairs, benches, and flower boxes as sidewalk furniture.

Ferrer asked Gomez if he would like to draft an application similar to the one used for the tree grant. She explained the committee would review and revise it over several meetings before sending it to Jonathan, the City Attorney, for his input.

She noted the process took several weeks, which delayed the project until fall, but emphasized the importance of starting early if they want to launch next spring. To have the grant application

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ready by February, the committee needs to begin drafting it soon, considering that the grants should be awarded by early to mid-March to allow businesses time to prepare for planting in March or April. This timeline indicates a need for immediate action to avoid a tight deadline.

Gomez will aim to prepare a starting point for future discussions about the grant for the planters. He will also provide the relevant codes for review, hoping they are not too complex.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2024

Items for Next Meeting:

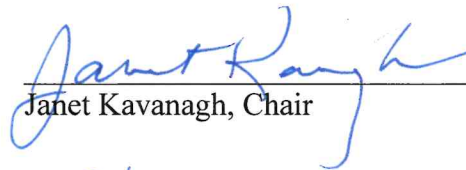
ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

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Submitted by/  
Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

SIGNED:

  
Janet Kavanagh, Chair

ATTEST:

  
Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

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