

MINUTES

Beautification and Tree Committee Meeting

March 17, 2025

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MINUTES

BEAUTIFICATION AND TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

March 17, 2025

VIA ZOOM/IN PERSON

PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debi Ferrer, John Nelson, Chuck Gomez

ABSENT: Jann Oldenburg

Staff Liaison: Abby Jara, Staff Liaison

Also in attendance: Cynthia Keever, Ex Officio Member

CALL TO ORDER

Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

ROLL CALL

Executive Assistant Abigail Jara conducted roll call; Ferrer, Gomez, Nelson, present  
Oldenburg absent

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Gomez and seconded by Ferrer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 3 to 0; Gomez, Ferrer, Nelson voting in favor; none opposed; Oldenburg absent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Gomez and seconded by Ferrer to approve the March 3, 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried 3 to 0; Gomez, Ferrer, Nelson voting in favor; none opposed; Oldenburg absent

**BEAUTIFICATION & TREE COMMITTEE**

"To promote and honor our rich cultural history, share and enhance the beauty of our community, and strengthen communal pride in our public spaces through citizen engagement, advocacy, recognition, and partnerships."

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### Lead Project Assignments

Nelson stated the committee needs to review the strategic plan to determine which projects they can take on and which ones they can't. (See attached).

Ferrer noted there's no indication of funding the committee would receive for next fiscal year but suggested first identifying priorities for the remainder of the year and determining which projects should be prioritized for the following year.

Nelson stated the Residential Tree Grant remains a priority.

The committee reviewed other goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Ferrer volunteered to develop a tree plan, research grant opportunities, and explore whether the Department of Forestry could assist with a tree inventory and canopy mapping.

Nelson asked whether this includes a tree inventory.

Ferrer clarified it would, explaining a tree inventory, canopy mapping, along with projects that involve plantings are typically part of a tree plan.

Nelson understood and noted the importance <sup>of</sup> if a tree plan, stating that it supports the committee's role in addressing climate change by creating green space and providing shade which lowers temperatures for residents living in the community.

The discussion moved on to goal number 2.

Ferrer mentioned now the trash cans are completely installed, the committee can remove the item from their strategic plan.

Nelson stated he would like to keep it in the strategic plan because he wants to add trash cans along Sixth Street.

Gomez noted the fast-food chains and strip mall already have trash cans. However, he thinks this does not rule out the possibility of placing additional trash cans along Sixth Street.

Ferrer agreed to keep the item on the plan, but noted it wouldn't be a priority.

The discussion then moved on to Goal Number 3.

Nelson asked if the committee would still like to add sculptures within the community.

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Ferrer mentioned sculptures have been added every year, she expressed a desire to continue this effort in collaboration with Columbia Gorge Community College and hopes to add another sculpture next year.

Nelson asked how much effort the committee would like to dedicate to creating an award for businesses.

Gomez noted that the committee needs more members and suggested revisiting the discussion later in the year.

Ferrer stated that she would prioritize downtown planters over business awards.

Jara mentioned under goal 3 she removed 'Historical building recognition downtown—sidewalk stars' because the Planning Department recently completed a similar project. Each historic building downtown now has a plaque with a QR code linked to the Ottocast application.

The committee agreed to keep benches and bump outs on the strategic plan, as both may be expanded in the future.

Jara asked if bike racks should remain on the plan, recalling that the previous chair intended to coordinate with Main Street on the project. No decision was made.

Nelson brought up the "Fencing art projects to hide empty lots, treatment plant," noting it has been on the plan for two years with no progress made. The committee discussed various ideas in detail.

Jara clarified the fencing projects involve private property, and the committee would need to contact property owners and recruit additional volunteers to take on such a project. The committee agreed not to take action unless a property owner initiates interest but decided to keep it on the strategic plan.

Goal Number 5 was discussed by the committee, focusing on how they would like it to be implemented.

Nelson asked whether prospective committee members would need to reside within the city.

Jara clarified that committee members are required to live within city limits.

### Downtown Planters Grant Application

Jara asked the committee if they can look over the application, with the corrections, and send it back to be able to send it to the City Attorney for final review.

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The committee reviewed and discussed the suggested changes.

Other Updates:

Keever updated the committee on the Annual Community Clean Up. For more information, please visit the city website.

Next Meeting: April 7, 2025

Items for Next Meeting:

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

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Submitted by/  
Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

SIGNED:

  
John Nelson, Chair

ATTEST:

  
Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

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