

MINUTES

Beautification and Tree Committee Meeting

December 2, 2024

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BEAUTIFICATION AND TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

December 2, 2024

VIA ZOOM/IN PERSON

PRESIDING: Janet Kavanagh

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

ABSENT: Jon Chavers

Staff Liaison: Abby Jara, Staff Liaison

Also in attendance: Cindy Kever, Ex Officio Member

CALL TO ORDER

Kavanagh called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Executive Assistant Abigail Jara conducted roll call; Ferrer, Kavanagh, Nelson, Drinkwine, Gomez present; Chavers absent

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Vice Chair requested the agenda be amended to add an item 6A for consideration of the Garden Awards.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Nelson and seconded by Gomez to approve the October 21, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried 4 to 4; Nelson, Gomez, Kavanagh, Drinkwine voting in favor; none opposed; Chavers, Ferrer absent

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Nelson wanted to clarify on the November 18, 2024 minutes, there was a conversation regarding the planter not having native roses but there are native roses like Rosa Nut Kana and Rosa Woodsii.

It was moved by Gomez and seconded by Nelson to approve the November 18, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried 4 to 0; Gomez, Nelson, Drinkwine, Kavanagh voting in favor; none opposed; Chavers, Ferrer absent

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Garden Awards

Nelson said he had picked up the last sign from Carolyn Bernal's house and stored it in his basement for use next year. He asked about the status of the program, noting that no additional actions seemed necessary if it continued as is. He also invited thoughts or recommendations on potential changes to improve the program.

Kavanagh stated she believes the committee should have a business award of the month.

(Ferrer joined the meeting at 4:06 pm).

Nelson noted during the first year of the Beautification Committee, the initial awards focused on recognizing businesses that tailored to the downtown area.

Kavanagh said she would like for the awards to include businesses throughout the entire city. She suggested considering another sign.

Nelson asked if this would be a separate committee.

Kavanagh said she thinks it would fall under the umbrage of the existing group.

Nelson asked if the committee will be giving an award to businesses every month, in addition to the residential awards and creating another sign.

Kavanagh said yes.

Nelson said they'll have to consider costs in the future. It was asked for clarification whether the signs would be placed outside the downtown core, leaving the downtown area to Main Street's purview.

Kavanagh said downtown is a very separate area with unique restrictions, such as not being able to plant in the dirt, which makes it a separate consideration.

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Nelson suggested someone could propose the idea and recommended inviting a representative from Main Street to discuss the separation between downtown and other areas.

Gomez said he wouldn't want to differentiate downtown.

Nelson stated if there are two committees doing the same thing, there needs to be clarity.

Update on Bulb Planting

The committee planted about 200 bulbs at the downtown triangle.

Kavanagh asked if in the next couple of weeks, they should consider going to Kelly Avenue triangle to plant more bulbs.

The committee did not decide.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Trevitt Triangle Spring Planting-Patricia Gates

Kavanagh said Public Works has agreed to handle all the prep work. The landscape expert, Patricia Gates, will then collaborate with Public Works to ensure they get the right materials. Gates will purchase the plants.

Jara mentioned the group would likely use their entire budget by the end of the year. She wanted to keep everyone informed about the current budget status. She also asked about the status of the pathway, as it had not been confirmed previously. She brought up a point raised by Ferrer at a previous meeting about limiting the number of people in the area due to safety concerns, as it is a high-traffic zone.

The committee discussed the status of the pathway, deciding that it would be used for utilitarian purposes only and would not be designed to be inviting enough for pedestrians to walk on.

Kavanagh said after some discussion the City is fully on board and had seen the rendering and invoice, given by Gates.

Keever stated as long as someone provides the date, time, and any necessary materials or equipment, Public Works would be ready. As long as they know a month ahead.

Jara mentioned the only concern at the City Manager's office is the pathway being adjusted, as discussed earlier, due to safety concerns.

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Nelson suggested that one option for the landscape design would be to avoid creating a defined pathway. Instead, it could feature low shrubs that allow access to the area without inviting people to walk through. The goal would be to keep the area usable without encouraging pedestrian traffic.

It was moved by Nelson and seconded by Gomez to approve Trevitt Triangle Spring Planting and the Coordination between Patricia Gates Landscape and the City. The motion carried 5 to 0, Nelson, Gomez, Ferrer, Kavanagh, and Drinkwine voting in favor; none opposed; Chavers absent.

DISCUSSION

Review of Draft for Downtown Sidewalk Grant

Gomez explained he had rewritten the tree grant proposal, updating the wording to focus on plants, planters, and flower pots with a \$300 limit.

The committee did not have a copy of the updated proposal. It was suggested to revisit the proposal at the next meeting.

Kavanagh asked whether the proposal should first be reviewed by Matthew, City Manager, before proceeding with detailed planning and writing would be beneficial, as he ultimately makes the final decisions.

Jara said okay.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Kavanagh said when the information about the plaques for the sculptures was sent, no attachment was included, she asked if pictures had been sent.

Jara clarified the information was included in the body of the email rather than as an attachment. She noted the email did not include a design or indicate how the plaques would look.

Kavanagh asked if everyone had seen the email, expressing concern that it was too lengthy and wordy.

Jara stated that she would forward the email again for the committee to review.

Kavanagh asked Ferrer for an update regarding the grants.

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Ferrer reported she scheduled an appointment with representatives who assist with the grant application process. During the meeting, it was recommended to pursue the Urban Forestry Grant, which aligns with planting more trees and conducting data collection to identify areas needing additional trees. The Urban Forestry Grant, while still complex and time-consuming, was noted to be simpler to apply for and comes from a different funding pool. Ferrer scheduled a follow-up appointment with a representative from the Urban Forestry Department, set for December 11, to discuss the application process further. It was mentioned the grants would become available starting in 2025.

Nelson asked what the Urban Forestry Grant offers.

Ferrer explained the purpose of the upcoming appointment is to receive recommendations about the grant. She noted the Urban Forestry Grant offers a larger funding pool, with grant money available from 2024 to 2028 and grants specifically for smaller projects. Whereas the Green Infrastructure Grants, which are more focused on infrastructure such as bioswales for storm drainage. She also added while the committee could have pursued the Green Infrastructure Grants, the timing was challenging. The application window opened in early October and closed at the end of November, which coincided with a particularly busy period, making it difficult to complete the necessary work within the timeframe.

Kavanagh asked if it was for the infrastructure.

Ferrer clarified the funding is for the Urban Forestry Grant. They offer bigger projects but one area that's specifically for smaller projects that range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 like for tree plantings. She stated The Dalles is an underserved community with limited resources and there are certain measurements that gives the committee a bigger advantage.

Ferrer explained the Urban Forestry Grant application process is more complex than the simpler tree grant applications the committee is familiar with. The process involves multiple steps, including applying for eligibility, registering to use the grant application system, and coordinating with the Urban Forestry team. She estimated the completion process to be two months. The Urban Forestry Grant application is already available online, allowing for early completion before the grant officially opens. Additionally, the Urban Forestry Grant offers tools and videos to assist applicants like the canopy inventory system, which could help develop a map or inventory to prioritize tree planting and identify areas of need, and plans on asking them for assistance and invited committee members to join the meeting if interested.

Kavanagh said she would be in Arizona on December 11 but expressed interest.

Nelson stated he would join the meeting if its free.

Ferrer encouraged members to send any questions in advance. One of her questions for the meeting was recommendations for tools to gather data about the canopy and tree diversity, and

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the associated costs. She explained the grant process includes a separate budget form, which can also help with cost estimates. She hopes the application can be completed and submitted before the next Tree Project.

Gomez shared his thoughts on the tree grant project, expressing a strong sense of pride in the initiative. Although he joined the committee later, he expressed his happiness with the project, noting the joy of seeing the trees they helped plant in the park. He emphasized connecting people to the emotional and health benefits of the program could help it grow exponentially, as people would feel a sense of joy and pride from receiving a tree or seeing their neighbors with one. He suggested this approach could lead to greater community involvement in the future.

Ferrer reminded the committee if the tree grant project grows exponentially, additional help will be needed, as the committee was already at capacity last year.

Nelson shared after some discussion with Ferrer about finding volunteers to help on occasion, rather than relying solely on committee members, he said these volunteers, like Gomez's wife, could be useful for tasks such as tree giveaways or occasional projects like weeding or bulb planting. He emphasized the need to establish a pool of volunteers for a couple of hours and suggested the idea could be explored further in a future discussion.

Gomez reassured Ferrer acknowledging the committee was stretched thin during the tree giveaway last year, with everyone scrambling to distribute the trees. He said if more trees are available next year, he could bring additional help, offering to recruit a group of volunteers to assist with handing out trees and directing people.

Ferrer clarified the challenge wasn't just on the day of the tree giveaway, but in the extensive preparation leading up to it. This included organizing a spreadsheet of names and addresses, ensuring recipients had appropriate places for the trees, and prioritizing distribution based on factors such as location, neighborhood, and the established criteria.

Gomez asked if Ferrer had done most of the preparation work.

Ferrer responded Kavanagh, Nelson, and herself had split up the work.

Gomez agreed the work should be divided and offered to take on a portion of the tasks.

Ferrer acknowledged the work was time-consuming with 50 trees and emphasized if 100 trees are distributed next year, at least twice as many people will be needed to assist with tracking down recipients. also mentioned the possibility of applying for staff time through the grants and expressed interest in exploring this option, so that some of the committee's tasks could be delegated to paid staff.

Nelson added the City could assist as well.

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Ferrer noted they would need to work with city staff on the grant application to explore how they might secure additional help.

Kavanagh added with Cynthia now on the committee, working together with the city on common goals in real time would be beneficial.

Next Meeting: December 16, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 pm.

Submitted by/
Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

SIGNED:


John Nelson, Chair

ATTEST:


Abigail Jara, Executive Assistant

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