



Shade Tree and Beautification

Commission Meeting

Minutes

January 30, 2024

3:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Matthew T. Starr	Mayor	Present	
James Brown	Chair	Present	
Brian Ball	City Engineer	Excused	
Colleen Clarkson	Board Member	Present	
Quetin Platt	Asst. Engineer	Present	
Duane Barber	Board Member	Excused	
Sarah Wagner	Board Member	Present	
Laura De Leon	Board Member	Present	
Randy Pursel	Parks Department	Present	

MINUTES APPROVAL

November 28, 2023

Ms. Clarkson made a motion to accept the November 28, 2024 minutes. Ms. DeLeon seconded the motion. AIF, motion carries

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Brown stated the City's Budget has not been approved yet.

REGIONOMICS

Mayor Matt Starr stated that he will be showing a chart to give us an understanding as to where Mount Vernon compares to growing cities, stable cities and declining cities in the national average in ascending trends. He stated that this is a presentation that was put together at the Area Development Foundation, our economic development partners by working together with Bill Lafayette, an economist who studies the different trends in Ohio.

Household Incomes - In 2020-2021 there was a study of Household Incomes. The National average was \$97,000.00, Growing cities are at \$108,000.00 and Mount Vernon is at \$62,000.00 which is below stable cities and barley above declining cities.

Unemployment - 2.7% is our unemployment rate which is great but sometimes one person could have 3 of those jobs.

Education - Adults with a High School degree, we are with the National Average but below the growing cities but above declining and stable cities.

Medium Incomes - Change in medium incomes from 2008-2012 to 2017-2021 there was a change in the US average of 35%. The growing cities were at 28.079 and Mount Vernon was at 21.6 which is above stable cities and declining cities.

Housing-Gross rent we are pretty reasonable in monthly gross rent, this does not include apartments that we not up.

Retail - There was a change is retail environment, we lost 32.2% of our retail establishments over a 20 year period, but we are bouncing back. We are below stable cities and in line with declining cities.

Restaurant establishments-over a 20 year period we had a 14% increase.

The Mayor said what all of this means to the Shade Tree Commission is that we have several developments coming in and likely more coming in this year.

Stormwater run off will be an issue and trees are going to be a huge part of sucking up all of the run off. The EPA is studying the Columbus area and looking at the Licking River, Sciota River and the Walhonding River and just getting a 3000 foot view to get an assessment of our rivers and water sources right now. Mayor Starr stated that it could be a unfunded mandate, he doesn't know right know but would like to position ourselves to be in front of the line when it comes to grant opportunities. The work that this commission does in our sustainability efforts for storm water run off and water is going to be a key ingredient in the grant application process.

Mayor Starr has been talking to Quentin Platt about the sustainability 2050 program through MORPC and are looking for cost containment for our services here. We are looking at our operations to save money and stretch our tax payers money farther than if we did not take these measures. The Mayor stated that's one of the things that we would like very much in the sustainability effort not this year but in 2025 or 2026 is to have this group have a hand in a Urban Forestry Master Plan. It will take 2 years to do and we will need to find the money to do it so that we don't have to take the money out of things that this commission is doing here. It will be a 2 year process and will need to update our inventory and looking at a whole lot of things. This group will have a very important measure in how we manage the growth very soon. We will have a Zoning Code update to share which is going to be from one stand point to take measure by managing the run off by instituting trees and vegetation and other things around parking lots and the parking areas.

Ms. Clarkson stated that she had some things she would like to see changed in the code regarding removing of trees. Mayor Starr asked her to email Lacie Blankenhorn with her ideas.

OLD BUSINESS

Fall Plantings

TCP

Mr. Wade stated that they are working on this and are over half done. There were 80 trees on the list to be planted.

Grants

Ms. Clarkson stated that she did make a list of everything coming out of Account #535. There is a new grant page which is #535.01. The Arborvitae's are in and AFP is about done. We have 15 projects with a lot of trees in each area. Ms. Clarkson stated that for 2024 we need to consider tree planting for Knox Transit, West side of Sandusky Street Sidewalk project, the West End, Health Department and possibly the State Route 13 project.

Ms. Clarkson stated to Mr. Wade that he placed the flags at Saint Vincent tree lawn area and asked if there were any place else they were hoping to get to next. Mr. Wade stated he planned to get to AFP and TCP trees next. Ms. Clarkson asked if the ornamental trees in front of Saint Vincent would get taller. Mr. Wade stated that they will get wider but not taller.

WATER BAGS

Mr. Brown stated that he will order 100 water bags after the budget gets approved and that should water all of the trees that we are planting this year.

HIAWATHA PARK

Scott Zimmerman stated that he received an email from Mr. Campbell at the KCCC. Mr. Campbell stated that the class will not be available to plant trees until April 1, 2024, he will get 2 classes to work together which will be 40 kids to plant the 66 trees at Hiawatha Park. Mr. Brown stated that the Arbor Trust will be funding the project.

BEE CITY

Mr. Platt stated that they are going to try to plant trees on Harcourt Rd and they still have seeds to cast at AFP.

Mr. Brown stated that he had a 1 lb bucket of milkweed seeds and he stood out at the west end of the conservancy with the wind to his back and throw the seeds and spread them all around.

NEW BUSINESS

ODNR Grant

Mr. Brown stated that this grant came out last year for \$500,000.00 and we have the application in on that but have not heard anything on that yet. The grant covered from West High Street south clear out to the Country Club Dr., past the Industrial Park, that whole area. It is a 2 year program and they would come in and audit what we have done every quarter and reimburse us every quarter for what we have done. Mr. Brown had Mr. Ball put a proposal in for 800 trees to plant 400 trees a year for 2 years. Mr. Zimmerman did a proposal to do all of the pruning and fertilizing and he would do a monthly inspection on every tree that is put in. Mr. Brown stated that we also talked about putting trees at the Industrial Park, and at the Riparian which is at Delano Run, Dry Creek and Adams Run.

Clintonville Area:

Mr. Brown stated that the city put in new stormwater, sewer and waterline out by Grange and Fearn Ave., on the north side of town. That neighborhood is going to need trees and we need to target this area.

EPA Grant

Mr. Brown stated that there is another grant that has come up which is through the EPA for 20 million and we are working on that grant right now. The dead line is November 21, 2024 and it is a 3 year grant. This is the Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grant. We will hit the Industrial Park and talked about putting in an area for food trucks to cut down on lunch time traffic in that area with more plantings. It runs north along Sandusky Street to the West along by Shalimar and Chester Street where work had been in that area. Mr. Ball added some things to the list he wanted done. He wants to do some improvements at the WWTP and the Wastewater Plant, work on sidewalks on St. Rt. 13 and a lot of stormwater projects. He also has some ideas for Beam's Lake including doing some restoration there. Mr. Brown stated that we are working on these two grants.

Mount Vernon Garden Club

The Mount Vernon Garden Club has offered \$2000.00 for plantings in a green area. Mr. Brown stated that we need to talk about what we would like to do. Mr. Brown stated that the Mayor had talked about the Flags and Flowers project to make the city look more appealing, maybe we can do something like that with some of this money. Ms. Clarkson stated that we need to get more information of what their ideas are. Ms. Wagner stated that Susan Givens of the Garden Club would be the person to talk to. Mr. Brown stated that he would invite her to the next meeting. Mr. Platt stated that we are still planning on doing the ditch at Hiawatha Park and make it vegetated so that the Parks Department would not have to mow it. This could be an idea that we could use the money to plant flowers there.

Mr. Brown stated that we had a planting request for 409 E. Pleasant Street. The city replaced the sidewalks about 10 plus years ago and this commission talked to the neighbors about planting trees along there but no one wanted tree planted in the right of way. Mr. Brown said that Mr. Platt's concerns are that since the area has been a parking lot for so long it is very compacted. We would have to do something to enhance the soil.

Other**Sandusky Street-St. Rt. 13 South Sandusky Street Landscaping Project-**

Mr Platt emailed information and a map showing ideas for the Landscaping project at S. Sandusky Street/St. Rt. 13. Mr. Platt and Mr. Mikesell emailed their comments to the commission members. Mr. Platt stated that the soil is very dry and Mr. Mikesell put a list together a list of trees that would be good with the types of soil at the location of the project.

Ms. Clarkson stated that she would like to see some diversity but really likes the walkway. Mr. Brown stated that he talked to Mr. Platt about the apple trees and there is a possibility that the area will be slopped more so that area could be back off of the road more. Ms. Wagner asked why were getting rid of the apple trees. Mr. Brown stated that the apple trees are really in very poor condition and probably at the end of their life cycle. Ms. Clarkson commented about the removal of the trees and that she would like to see some flowering trees and maximize the shade trees. Ms. Clarkson stated that she liked the diversity of the plans and the path. Mr. Brown commented on the benches that are shown along the road and said who wants to set next to the road. Everyone agreed. Mr. Brown stated that on drawing #1 he asked what RRFB stood for. Mr. Platt stated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon. Mr. Platt stated that there is not a good spot to get across St. Rt. 13 unless you can go across Gay St. and then you can go across the bridge and then cross it at the crosswalk.

ADJOURN

Mr. Brown adjourned the meeting.