

Tree Committee Meeting

May 21, 2015

Conference Room at City Hall

Members present: Harriet Gutknecht, JoAnne Hogan (left meeting at 3:50 p.m.), Skip Jones, Patrick Waldrop, Paul Fontenot, Jennifer Fidler; ex-officio, Allison Chang, David Dyson. Rich Mueller; City Council member and Jeff Davies were absent. Gayle Fogarty took minutes.

Paul Fontenot called the meeting to order. The minutes from the meeting held on Thursday, February 12, 2015 were reviewed and approved 1st motion by Patrick Waldrop and 2nd by Harriett Gutknecht and unanimously carried.

New Members-

Paul Fontenot welcomed new members - Allison Chang and David Dyson to be on the Tree Committee.

Arbor Day – Harriet Gutknecht provided an update on Arbor Day that took place on February 28, 2015, she stated the event went very well. She felt that preparing the seedlings the day before was a big help, as well as all the volunteers that assisted with that project. Patrick Waldrop provided a list of suggested tree seedlings (see attached) to be given away next year at Arbor Day. The group agreed that they were good suggestions and Jennifer F. will look into each of the suggestions. Paul Fontenot suggested having one person designated to be over the vendor portion of Arbor Day. This person would be responsible for contacting vendors, vendor set-up needs, confirming vendor participation and being a point person for the vendors on the day of the event. They would also encourage visitors of the event to stop by the vendor/information tables. Paul F. suggested more social media on Arbor Day and possibly showing a large photo of the award winner's property during the event. JoAnne Hogan suggested to having someone in place in advance to Bless the Trees, Harriett stated that she could secure someone for 2016. The committee agreed all these suggestions were good ideas.

There was general discussion among the group regarding Arbor Day and the date set for next year was determined as Saturday, February 27, 2016. The group set January 14, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. as the date to drive around town and judge the beautification awards.

Live Oak in front of Lutheran Church – Paul Fontenot informed the group that he meet with Gary of Ickes Tree Service about the *live oak* -located in front of the Lutheran Church. He stated that Gary told him that the tree has a lifespan of 5-7 more years, if no action is taken. If mitigation is done to try and save the tree, the lifespan of the tree maybe extended. Gary offered some suggestions to Paul involving a deep root feeding program. Paul added that he has not spoken to Chris Francis of Chris Francis Tree Care for his professional opinion. Skip Jones proposed that Paul get a step by step care plan in writing from Gary for the committee to review, then present to Mayor Kant. There was general discussion among the committee regarding the *live oak*. Jennifer Fidler suggested that Paul F. meet with Chris Francis and get his opinion on saving the tree. Then once the two suggested care plans are established, Paul will share the plans with the committee for further discussion at the next meeting. Patrick Waldrop also mentioned that he will contact the Auburn Extension and have them review this tree issue.

New Business- Patrick Waldrop complimented Jennifer Fidler and the City of Fairhope on the medians that are being installed on Fairhope Avenue. Jennifer Fidler brought up a couple issues for the committee to consider – Trees on Hwy 98 Corridor & Setbacks to protect the Tree Canopy in the Fruit & Nut area of Fairhope.

Jennifer feels that the maintenance agreement that is in place for the trees on the Hwy 98 Corridor with the County needs to be amended; currently the consequences for removing a tree are not severe enough. She also has concerns about the Tree Canopy and would like to discuss further at a future meeting. Paul F. suggested the City require permits for tree setbacks. David Dyson suggested that Tut Wynne attend a future meeting for clarification on this topic, as the setback is on private property. There was general discussion among the committee members.

Paul Fontenot inquired about what is involved in being a Tree Commission rather than a Tree Committee. Patrick Waldrop stated that he will look into this, as he has experience from working on a previous Tree Commission. Patrick W. will report back to the group at the next meeting.

There being no other business, the committee adjourned at 4:30 p.m.