

Beautification Commission Minutes
Wednesday, March 8, 2023
6:00 pm
Novi Civic Center
45175 10 Mile Rd.
Mayor's Conference Room

Call to Order: 6:03 pm

Roll Call: Jan Lach, Cindy Lang, Courtney Opalko, Shaun Page, Christen Pietraz, Celia Todd, Laura Williams, Torry Yu

Present: Jan Lach, Cindy Lang, Celia Todd, Laura Williams, Torry Yu

Arrived Late: Christen Pietraz

Approval of Minutes – February 8, 2023: Moved: Williams, Seconded: Lach, Approved 5:0

Approval of Agenda: Moved: Yu, Seconded: Lach, Approved 5:0

Old Business:

- Edible Garden Presentation/Webinar Review
 - All participating members enjoyed the presentation and had heard back positively from others who took part. The Commission agreed that they would consider holding such an event again, but Commissioner Williams also noted that in the future we may want to have a seminar either in person or arranged so that there would be greater accessibility for those community members that may not be able to easily access or utilize software like zoom.
- Plant Identification Signs
 - Staff Liaison Oppermann provided the Commission with the current design for the new plant identification signs to be installed at the Fuerst Park Monarch Waystation. All members approved of the design.
 - In discussion of the webpage to be made for the QR code on the signs to link to Commission Chairperson Lang requested that the information provided include bloom season and sun needs so as to encourage visitors to the park to consider planting some themselves at their own residence. It was also suggested that a brief history of the park and the Monarch Waystation project be included.
- Errant Membership and Meeting Quorums
 - The Beautification Commission was updated regarding City Council's approval of the removal of long absent Commission Shaun Page at the February 27, 2023, City Council meeting.
 - The Beautification Commission also made the decision to submit a request to City Council for an Ordinance Amendment to reduce the Commission composition from the current nine members down to seven members. It is the feeling of the Commission that this smaller number of members will allow them to have the quorum required for a formal meeting more frequently. Commission Secretary Jan Lach kindly provided a draft for the language to be used in the request.

New Business:

- Officer Elections
 - Cindy Lang and Jan Lach were unanimously re-instated as Commission Chair and Secretary respectively.
- 2023 Entryway Enhancement Grant Program Discussion and Voting
 - The Beautification Commission was provided with a digital package of all applications received for the 2023 Entryway Enhancement Grant Program in advance so they could review the materials and make site visits. During the course of the meeting the Commissioners discussed their individual impressions and voted on the four applications from Ashbury Park, Camden Court, Knightsbridge Gate, and Oberlin.

1. Ashbury Park (\$5,000)

- The Beautification Commission commented that the Annabelle Hydrangeas proposed may prove problematic for Ashbury Park as they require a great deal of water and can grow to be very large. They suggest that Ashbury Park consider reducing the number planted so that they are 3 to 10 feet apart or to consider choosing a different type of hydrangea or even an ornamental grain or grass to be planted instead.

Motion to recommend approval of the requested grant to City Council with the recommendation of adjusting their plan regarding the Annabelle Hydrangeas.

Motion Maker: Yu, Seconded: Pietraz, Approved 6:0

2. Camden Court (\$4,306.50)

- The Beautification Commission generally approved this plan but were very concerned to see that the landscaping plan included several burning bushes, an invasive species. They respectfully request that, as a condition of the grant approval, that Camden Court work with their landscaper to select a different, non-invasive shrub to replace the burning bush in their plans, with a preference for a native shrub.

Motion to recommend approval of the requested grant to City Council with the condition of the proposed invasive burning bush on the plan being replaced with a non-invasive, preferably native shrub.

Motion Maker: Lach, Seconded Yu, Approved 6:0

3. Knightsbridge Gate (\$4,700)

- The Beautification Commission fully endorsed this project, noting the need given the age of the existing sign. They agree that the project would both beautify the entrance and improve visibility for those looking for the subdivision.

Motion to recommend approval of the requested grant to City Council.

Motion Maker: Lach, Seconded Pietraz, Approved 6:0

4. Oberlin (\$4,974)

- The Beautification Commission members were concerned at the lack of a formal landscape plan and also noted that the existing subdivision entrance is both attractive and very, very new. While they appreciate the application, they would suggest that, should Oberlin apply again in a future cycle, they should present a more comprehensive plan and wait for the subdivision to be at least 10 years of age.

Motion to deny the requested grant and not recommend it to City Council.

Motion Maker: Yu, Seconded Pietraz, Approved 6:0

- Spring Social Media Promotion
 - The Commission discussed having a seasonal social media to help visibility of the commission as well as engage the community in enjoying the beauty of the season and the fun of decorating and gardening/landscaping at their own home or business. This would be done by encouraging residents and businesses to send in/use the hashtag on photos of seasonal displays/décor. They would like to utilize a new hashtag for both this event and any other Beautification Commission promotions across social media. Initial suggestions were to promote over Facebook and Twitter with the request for Staff Liaison Oppermann to communicate with the City Community Relations team on suggestion on the running of the program.
 - They would like to start off with a Spring promotion, potentially running through the 1st day of Spring (March 20, 2023) through Earth Day (April 22, 2023).
 - Commissioner Pietraz volunteered to create a draft for the language and prompts for the campaign.
- Reinvigoration of the Adopt-A-Park-Sign Program
 - The Commission discussed the re-invigoration of the Adopt-a-Park-Sign Program. The program as it was established in 2018 but has never had any participants in its current form. Some suggestions included:
 - Having “boiler plate” landscape designs the interested parties can use instead of having to create their own from scratch. The Commission could work on this or engage City Staff (such as Landscape Architect Rick Meader) to design some basic landscape plans for the various park signs.
 - Shortening the duration of the sign “adoption” which is currently set at two years. Consider making the duration one-year or even seasonal so it could be used as a group volunteer opportunity.

Public Comment: none

Adjournment: 7:18 pm

Upcoming Meetings: 4/12, 5/10, 6/14, 7/12, 8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13