



MINUTES–Beautification Advisory Board

January 26, 2021

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The Beautification Advisory Board of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in regular session at Oscar M. Corbin, Jr. City Hall 2200 Second Street, on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Present were Margie Willis, Chair, presiding, Board Members, Elaine Gulati, Debbie Hughes, Pattie Robinson, and Mary Vogt. Also present were JB Schuetz, Parks & Beautification Manager, Jose Parrilla, Parks & Beautification Senior Supervisor, Michele Jones, Administrative Assistant. Absent: Committee Members Mitzi Marckesano, Piper Smith, and Wilmer Carter.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Willis called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG AND ROLL CALL

Chair Willis led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a roll call was taken by Ms. Jones

PUBLIC COMMENT

J.B. Schuetz introduced Jose Parrilla, Parks Senior Supervisor. Mr. Schuetz stated that in February he will be retiring after 19 years with the City of Fort Myers, and that Mr. Parrilla will start to attend the meetings. Mr. Schuetz thanked the Board Members for their hard work and information they bring before the board.

Jerry Miller introduced himself and spoke about a property that is owned by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) that is at the corner of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Fowler Street near the 7-Eleven. He stated that he wanted to get their ideas on making it a portal park. Mr. Miller stated that he is on the Economic Advisory Board and they made a motion to ask the City Manager to look into it so he wanted to come before the Beautification Advisory Board to see if maybe they could work together and have their support. Mr. Miller showed pictures of the area and said he has had discussions before with FDOT and was told the city would have to request to take it over and there would have to be some planning with this board. Discussion of what a portal park is and what would be good for that area. Ms. Gulati suggested checkered board tables for chess would be good for a park. Mr. Miller stated that he thinks a half-court basketball court would be good for the area and some funding could possibly come from the Community Redevelopment Agency. Ms. Robinson discussed concerns with the location because of the surrounding area having one-way roads and not much housing in the area. Ms. Vogt stated that it seems like a good idea for this piece of property and asked what are the steps that need to be done to make this happen. Board Members discussed that Mr. Miller would need to get approval from City Council to investigate about taking the property over.

MOTION: Board Member Hughes moved to approve for Jerry Miller to ask City Council to investigate beautification of property; seconded by Board Member Vogt; motion carried unanimously.



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REGULAR ITEMS

1. Minutes of the October 27, 2020 Beautification Advisory Board meeting

MOTION: Board Member Hughes moved to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 Beautification Advisory Board meeting; seconded by Board Member Robinson; motion carried unanimously.

2. Beautification Awards

Chair Willis discussed the pictures that were taken for the Beautification Awards and passed them around for the Board Members to review for Ward 4. Board Members discussed the criteria and how the award process works with presenting the award to the homeowner. Mr. Schuetz stated that they have enough signs that they could select three houses for the award. Board Members agree that the top three addresses are: 1530 Del Rio Drive, 1668 Menlo Road, and 2218 Brevard Avenue. Mr. Schuetz stated that he will send each of the them a letter to contact us to schedule a time for the award.

MOTION: Board Member Robinson moved to approve the selection of the Beautification Awards; seconded by Board Member Hughes; motion carried unanimously.

3. Beecher Village

Mr. Schuetz gave an update on Beecher Village that is located on Suntrust Drive off Veronica Shoemaker Boulevard. He discussed they are currently in the process of installing the playground equipment. The plans for a sidewalk and pavilion will be later on.

4. Centennial Park

Mr. Schuetz gave an update on the construction progress. Discussion of the new irrigation being installed on the westside of park with larger rotor heads that will cover a larger area and installed 3” deep for there is less damage when tents are used for events. They will be landscaping underneath the bridge with irrigation and refurbishing with plants. The irrigation is currently at a standstill because we are waiting on FPL to locate power lines that connect solar panels to barn. City Council agreed on playground that will cost \$600,000 and will be named after Senator Benacquisto. Engineering Department is currently working on final draft of sidewalks to playground and elevation. On the eastside they are working on the elevation where the amphitheater will be and moving of art pieces to other locations within the park. Discussion of the memorial bricks that will be going in the median that is across from the Post Office on Monroe Street. Ms. Gulati asked if the City of Fort Myers ever considered putting in a skateboard park. Mr. Schuetz stated that they had one for over 10 years that was located across the street from the Skatium that could not fund itself, so it was converted to volleyball courts. Ms. Willis asked if any word on the city purchasing the land next to Centennial Park



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that would allow the expansion of the park and Mr. Schuetz said he hasn't heard anything.

5. The Forum

Mr. Schuetz discussed that they are still in the design phase and they have added a request to take over the medians. Discussion of the parks four parcels that total 23 acres and what amenities are planned. Currently working on parcel 18 that will have an outdoor fitness center with a lot of green space. Ms. Vogt asked about the water park and Mr. Schuetz said that it will be a splash pad with water shooting up from the ground that will be part of the second or third phase of project.

6. MLK/Veronica Shoemaker Blvd.

Mr. Schuetz gave an update on the landscaping plans of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard that will be a shared cost between the Community Redevelopment Agency and the City of Fort Myers. There will be an art piece as well as enhanced landscaping at the corner of MLK and Veronica Shoemaker to create an entranceway to the City of Fort Myers. Mr. Schuetz stated that after the completion of the entranceway they will be working on re-landscaping the medians that are over 20 years old. There is a total of 30 medians on MLK, and they will be starting on the three medians from Ortiz coming into Fort Myers and three medians at Evans leaving Fort Myers, and then hopefully the next year they will do six more.

7. Treeline Water Plant

Mr. Schuetz discussed the redesign of the Treeline Water Plant where it is still in the engineering phase. The trees and hedges are currently being grown at the City Nursery for the project that will consist of 23 oak trees and 48 green buttonwoods. The project will probably not be complete until next year once the building is complete.

8. Colonial Blvd./I-75 Interchange

Mr. Schuetz discussed the plans of the Colonial/I-75 Interchange where FDOT is redesigning the Colonial Interchange where there will be less traffic lights to help the flow of traffic. The Parks and Beautification Department is currently in the process of recycling the trees and plants, putting them on Hanson Street Extension and Palm Beach Boulevard.

9. Other Business

Mr. Schuetz discussed the Parks Department is working with the City of Fort Myers Golf Course on a two-year project to refurbish the pine areas in the two golf Courses. The Golf Course just bought 1,000 pine seedlings that Parks just planted into 1-gallon pots where they will transfer them into 10-gallon pots after a year.



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Ms. Schuetz discussed the City Nursery and how it has been restructured within the last two years with container trees on grow pads. Board Members said they would like to have a tour of the Nursery. Ms. Hughes mentioned about receiving calls at the Edison Ford Winter Estates with people wanting to donate Royal Palms, but they don't have the right equipment and was wanting to know if she should refer them to Parks. Mr. Schuetz said at one time they did accept donations but since 2003 they have been growing their own and currently have about 900 available at the City Nursery. Ms. Robinson discussed about some of the Palms needing to be replaced and asked how long it takes. Mr. Schuetz and Mr. Parrilla discussed the area that they cover, what areas are currently scheduled, and the problem of only having a heavy workload and only one crane.

Ms. Willis asked about what is being done about Lion's Park because it's looking terrible with everything lined up along the fence line and full of homeless people. Mayor Kevin Anderson thanked the Board Members for all they do and discussed the challenges they have with the homeless situation. He stated that the Salvation Army opened a daycare today where they can get cleaned up and get counseling. He discussed that by Friday he hopes to announce the members of the Mayor's Task Force of Homelessness for they can come to the table with open minds to discuss solutions or recommendations to bring to City Council that are practical, actionable, reasonable, viable, and sustainable. He hopes they will have recommendations they will be able to move forward on within the next six months. Discussion on how it's a very complicated complex problem that's going to take a lot of work and not change overnight. Mayor Anderson said he is committed in trying to find solutions to the problem. Discussion of how panhandling in the area has increased and how the approach of giving to a local charity is what needs to be promoted for everyone to do instead.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Board Member Willis, seconded by Board Member Robinson; and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:42 p.m.