

Village of Richfield Tree and Landscape Commission

Minutes – Meeting of July 22, 2019

Present: Lois Czekaj, Theresa Kovak, Dale Rogers, Polly Wheeler, Gary Domanick

Others present: Mayor Beshara, Walt Dorsey, Chris Papp, Pat Healey, Michael Wheeler, Barbara Lanford (7pm), Rob Morgan, Bob Glover, Sue Serdinak

Meeting was called to order at 6:29 pm

Review of April 22, 2019 minutes. Theresa moved to approve minutes; Dale seconded. Unanimously approved.

Old Business

1) Adopt-a-Spot beautification project

- a. 10 spots have been chosen, prepared, planted and are being maintained. The locations were reviewed. The dirt put into the beds by Walt and his crew was really good quality worm dirt.
- b. There have been some issues in a few places, but those are being addressed or adjusted. The spot in front of the Brecksville Rd service building had to be replanted because the daisies failed to thrive. Some spots could have used more plants. Gary pointed out that this year is the pilot for the program, and it is a learning curve.
- c. Some sponsor signs need to be made smaller or, preferably, moved to the back of the bed.
- d. Next year more spots may be added if appropriate places can be identified. There are four sponsor companies and five stewards on the waiting list for next year.
- e. Lois suggested that more perennials should be planted next year. This could reduce yearly maintenance, but it would also reduce the stewards' ability to change the plant arrangement in the beds each year. Lois also thought that our spots looked much nicer this year than those in Cuyahoga Falls, our program model.
- f. Stewards' "thank you" event will be held during a regular Tree & Landscape meeting on September 23, 2019 at 6:30pm in the mayor's meeting room. T&L Commission members will be asked to donate finger foods. Stewards will be recognized for their contributions and efforts at this meeting and in the local news media.
- g. Sue Serdinak stated that we need to "garden smart". She suggested more perennials, pollinator-friendly plants, and low maintenance plants. Constantine's could be consulted for assistance.
- h. Polly stated that the stewards' names should be listed on the signs in the planting beds for greater recognition of their contributions. She stated that it is easy to write a \$250 check; it is much harder to put in all the work required to plant and maintain a spot for an entire season.

2) Rob Morgan design review

- a. For this year the focus is on areas A, B, and C of the plan, which are the front of Village Hall toward Streetsboro Rd, the entry area on the south side of the building, and the entry area of the Senior Center.
 - i. Bids went out to landscape contractors in April. It has been difficult to get bids back this year due to weather and labor issues.
 - ii. Lake Erie Landscape is doing the planting. All plants are ordered. Planting is expected to begin on Wednesday or Thursday, July 24 or 25.
- b. Rob's design incorporated native and pollinator material. New plantings will not have grasses. These do not like mulch on their "feet", and they didn't do spectacularly well in the previous plan.

- c. The service department pulled out plants scheduled to be demolished in areas A, B, and C of the plan. They tried not to remove anything that would not be replanted this year.
 - i. The criteria for removal were disease, dying parts, and overcrowding, e.g. in the case of the irises near the Senior Center entrance.
 - ii. There are some dead and failing trees in our target areas, especially evergreens. Walt plans to leave those that are not completely dead for now, at least long enough for this year's Christmas lights.
- d. Natural mulch was used with no dyes. New mulch was ordered for the Village Hall area beds. For mulch in all other Village areas, a company was hired to bring in a tub grinder for one day to regrind our wood chips that are shredded when the service department collects branches. This may be a biennial event so that we can build up sufficient material to make hiring the tub grinder worthwhile.
- e. The plan calls for six redbud trees to be planted on the north side of Village Hall by the barnstone walls.
 - i. Walt will discuss with the contractor whether the service department or the contractor will plant these, depending on the original agreement and the cost.
 - ii. Rob recommended that these should be planted in the fall rather than now due to the summer heat.
 - iii. The placement of the redbuds needs to be verified with Rob Morgan before planting.
- f. New self-watering planters have been placed in Village Hall areas and are planted.
 - i. Worm dirt was used this year instead of potting soil, but it is not staying as moist.
 - ii. Rob suggested mixing halite into it next time, which is similar to crushed granite, or using potting soil.
 - iii. Pots are stained or dirty below the overflow holes on the outside. These need to be cleaned.
- g. On the south side of Village Hall, loriopse will be planted in beds closer to the building. Colorful annuals will be planted closer to the walks in near the drive. Bob Glover asked about the mix of annuals to perennials, which Rob estimated at about 60/40%.
- h. The remainder of the plan will not be implemented this year.
- i. Barb Lanford asked about the cost of the project and whether it was discussed in a Tree & Landscape meeting.
 - i. Gary said the cost was discussed in a T&L meeting.
 - ii. Rob described the process used to reach the estimate for everything, with the idea that we could break the project into phases and determine what's needed as we go along. He tried to be conservative for the benefit of the Village.
 - iii. Areas A, B, and C are costing about \$39,000 for this year. This is well below the \$50,000 approved by Council. Rob mentioned that the contractor can be delayed if necessary.
 - iv. These three areas are being used as a test for future areas, e.g. the fire station.
 - v. The original \$100,000 plan estimate was for everything going out to bid by contractors. Walt's crew has done a lot of work, so this cost will be reduced.
- j. Walt will work with Rob to keep planted areas from getting overcrowded. Polly asked whether this was why the irises by the Senior Center entrance were removed, and what the effects of the overcrowding would be. Rob said that when they get excessively crowded, they stop blooming much, so that is why they were removed.

New Business

- 1) The current condition of the Consolidated Freight property on Brecksville Rd, owned by Crown Enterprises, was mentioned.
 - a. The maintenance of this area and the cost of the maintenance were questioned.

- b. Mayor Beshara responded that Crown Enterprises was recently sent 72 pages of violations. From this point forward they will be billed for whatever maintenance is done by the Village service department, except for the plantings in the right of way that were installed by the Village.
 - c. Brian Frantz is required to follow the zoning code with respect to negotiations with the property owners. The proper steps are being taken, and Village Law Director Bill Hanna is being consulted on every aspect.
- 2) Next meeting will be September 23, 2019 at 6:30pm for the Adopt-a-Spot steward recognition.

Adjourned at 7:25pm
Submitted by Polly Wheeler