

**MINUTES**  
**MAYOR'S BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**  
**February 2, 2016**  
**Aging & Disability Resource Center, 300 Adams Street**  
**4:00 PM**

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Members Present: Lynn Austin, Muriel Austin, and Jim Sanderson.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

Jim Sanderson brought the book, "Birthplace of a Commonwealth," which contains photos of the original De Pere bridge at the rapids, before the dam was built, and the 1930s Claude Allouez bridge and dam. He also mentioned observing a submerged stone at De Pere in the bridge area, evidently a millstone.

Lynn Austin showed committee members the new Beautification logo designed by Nine3Nine Creative. Previously, the Mayor's Beautification Committee did not have a logo. They will now be listed under cooperative partners on the LaBaye.org website.

There was a discussion of the area's cattails and phragmites. Jim Sanderson mentioned a book written in the 1950s, which referred to cattails as "weeds." Lynn added that many native species were considered weeds unless they had attractive flowers.

Lynn Austin showed a Park's Department planting that was proposed in 1997 for the corner of Main and Morrow Street, which she recently sent to Alderman Dave Nennig and Three Corners Neighborhood President, Joanne Pipenberg. Dave Nennig told her he would contact the Park's Department to see if trees could be planted. The trees would preferably be oaks, since the area is within the Plat of Oak Grove.

Lynn Austin brought up the legislation introduced by Senator Dave Hansen, SB62. The Assembly version was AB297. An amendment was added by the request of the Wisconsin Association of Register of Deeds, which undermined its original purpose – to make publically owned historic documents fully usable and unencumbered by government agencies. Lynn requested that this issue be addressed at the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council's next meeting in Madison on February 17.

The Committee viewed The City of Green Bay website's main page. Members agreed that there is nothing green about Green Bay on the east shoreline of the Fox River. The boxed-in trees on the City Deck are small and almost unnoticeable. Mortar and concrete buildings are crowded together, with no green parkways or landscaping, resulting in little or no aesthetic appeal; the arrangement doesn't present a very public-friendly image of our downtown. It was pointed out that this is often the result when elected leadership accepts campaign contributions from developers. Members agreed that it demonstrates poor planning: too much paving, and an oversized dock with no space provided for trees. The committee agreed that the building-over of Admiral Flatley Park, which the committee strongly opposed, has turned out to be a serious mistake.

Lynn Austin mentioned that she was contacted by a UW Madison student, who would like assistance working on a study regarding how governments use tax dollars to present misinformation on

government sites, especially regarding fictional history accounts. The Jean Nicolet story has been proved to have no factual documentation showing that he actually came here, yet local government-funded institutions and our even our City website continue to present it as an established fact.

This led to a discussion about the collaborative film produced by Mayor Schmitt and Thomas F. Novotny, which is currently displayed on the Green Bay Historic Preservation Commission's page. The HPC's website states that Green Bay is Wisconsin's oldest settlement (1765); however, this claim is contradicted by the video itself. Beautification Committee members pointed out that Green Bay was founded in 1854 (as stated by the video); according to genuine historical references and written accounts, Wisconsin's oldest "settlement" is Chequamegon, and the first "settlement" in our portion of Northeastern Wisconsin was the Pottawatomi village on the Oconto River. It was agreed that it reflects badly on the entire city when the City website posts fictional claims.

The video begins with the depiction of a lone man, who is presented as Jean Nicolet, rowing a canoe across a body of water with no land in sight. Nicolet's Huron Indian traveling companions are noticeably absent, even though they were the majority in the diplomatic mission. This introduction is followed by a shot of the Fox River surrounded by wooded land before the scene segues into a more modern shot of developed Green Bay. Committee members pointed out that the initial scene of the Fox River is incorrect, since most of the eastside shoreline was originally marshy wetlands rather than woodland.

As the video continues, "Jean Nicolet," the narrator, explains that he is looking for the "Northwest Passage," a route to China. Committee members pointed out that this is also incorrect; Jean Nicolet and his companions were sent to resolve a dispute between the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Indians and the Ottawa Indians, which threatened to disrupt trade. It was many years later that Father Jacques Marquette arrived searching for a water route to the ocean—but it was a passage south, to the Gulf of Mexico. The video goes on to claim that Jean Nicolet stayed the entire winter in this area, before returning to the east, another clearly unsubstantiated claim.

Eventually, according to the video, Indian wars closed the area to outsiders. Lynn stated that this is incorrect. The French king, Louis XIV, who had financed the Jesuits, recalled them back to France and closed off all trading in the west due to the violations against the royal decree requiring non-involvement in the fur trade of New France.

The video continues to Charles De Langlade, the "Father of Wisconsin," and mentions him parceling out plots, another farfetched claim. The area's occupants, the video claims, made rules and enforced them; however, at that time, De Langlade was a British officer, and Charles Reaume was a British Judge, and the community at La Baye was in the service of the British government during the War of 1812.

The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM. Next month's meeting is scheduled for March 1.

Respectfully submitted,  
Muriel Austin