

**MINUTES**  
**MAYOR'S BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**  
**June 2, 2015**  
**Aging & Disability Resource Center, 300 Adams Street**  
**4:00 PM**

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Members Present: Paul Hartman, Lynn Austin, Mike Spencer, Jim O'Rourke, Muriel Austin

Also Present: Alderman Guy Zima, Angela Pierce, Jim Sanderson

Chairman Paul Hartman called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

The meeting began with a discussion of the City's current policy of removing mature, healthy trees. Such trees can be over a hundred years old and are well established. It was pointed out that the introduction of new trees can be difficult, especially in industrial and business areas where the topsoil has been removed due to construction. As a result, the number of mature trees in the City, especially in the downtown, is steadily decreasing. Photographs of Green Bay in the early 1900s show a thick canopy of trees across the entire downtown East Side; that is no longer the case. The Committee agreed to contact the City Forester, Mark Freberg, regarding the City's policy on the cutting down of large, healthy trees. Paul Hartman suggested having Mr. Freberg come to speak with the Committee at next month's meeting. It was also pointed out that the City has had problems in the past due to the lack of diversity in its choice of street trees, which has led to the loss of so many of our trees due to the emerald ash borer and Dutch elm disease. So many ash trees were planted because they were inexpensive. The question was raised as to whether the Parks Department has adequate funding to provide the trees necessary to "green up Green Bay."

Lynn Austin mentioned watching several presentations by a Russian environmentalist with a PhD in Forestry, who studied and is now working in the United States. This scientist observed that unlike the Russians, Americans tend to value appearance over usefulness or practicality—one example being the multi-billion dollar industry based around grass lawns, which are large consumers of water, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers although they have little to no purpose besides being ornamental. Currently, average Russian citizens are using approximately seven percent of the total agricultural land in Russia for personal family gardens; these gardens are producing more than half of the nation's food supply—more food than is produced by all of the commercial farming in Russia combined.

Jim Sanderson recently approached the Green Bay Historic Preservation Commission regarding the history of the military fort site downtown. It was his desire to provide some kind of distinguishing marker for the site. There is still one remaining Fort building in existence in Green Bay located on the west side. He pointed out that there is also a stone marker remaining at the site where the hospital had been moved to when the Railroad relocated the fort buildings; later, the hospital was moved again from the Chestnut Avenue site to Heritage Hill, but the stone marker remains with no building. Mr. Sanderson would like to see the hospital's marker placed

on the original fort hospital site, or some other appropriate place. When he was not successful with the Historic Preservation Commission, he decided to approach the Mayor's Beautification Committee, since we are responsible for the upkeep of shrines and monuments.

Mr. Sanderson also said that he has information regarding the gravestones that likely were the original Fort Howard military cemetery markers and monuments (as reported in the local newspaper in the 1980s when they were discovered). The stones were apparently used as landfill on a private lot on Vroman Street and discovered during a construction project. Lynn Austin said that that cemetery on the Fort Howard site is the oldest American military cemetery in the state

Mr. Sanderson also brought up the condition of the terrace between the curb and sidewalk in front of the parking ramp on the south side of Main Street (and extending to the east and west along Main Street); he felt that this property is unsightly and has been so for many years. He asked how this neglected area could get appropriate landscaping attention. Alderman Zima suggested writing to the Common Council requesting the City have the Parks Department landscape the area. Alderman Zima also suggested that the Mayor's Beautification Committee should report to a standing committee, such as the Parks Committee, so that our minutes and communications would become available to the City Council.

Lynn Austin made a motion, seconded by Mike Spencer, to forward a communication to the City Council requesting the Council address the landscaping of the downtown property that Jim Sanderson brought to the Mayor's Committee's attention. Motion passed.

Our guest speaker, Angela Pierce, Natural Resources Planner with the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, reported the results of a recent study on the water quality at Bay Beach to determine if it is possible to have a swimming beach there. E. coli bacteria levels determine whether beaches are safe for swimming. According to test results, microcystin levels at Bay Beach are far below the danger standards as determined by the World Health Organization. There is a low health risk as far as PCBs, and the amount of methylmercury is very low as well. The study results determined that health risks are not an issue. The League of Women Voters is sponsoring a potluck at Bay Beach Amusement Park on June 18, from 11:30 – 2:00 in Shelter #1, on the subject of creating a swimming beach for the Bay Beach Park and has asked Angela Pierce to speak.

Ms. Pierce also mentioned that she has recently received a grant to remove phragmites growing along the area rivers and waterways.

Jim O'Rourke brought up the issue of street-end parks and suggested organizing waterfront groups.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM. Next month's meeting is scheduled for July 7.

Respectfully submitted,  
Muriel Austin