

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
July 7, 2015
Aging & Disability Resource Center, 300 Adams Street
4:00 PM

Members Present: Paul Hartman, Bob Mongin, Lynn Austin, Jim O'Rourke, Alderman David Nennig, Muriel Austin

Also Present: Jim Sanderson

Chairman Paul Hartman called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

The committee discussed the topic of City street trees, including reasons for the removal of trees, such as interference with street signs or electric lines. The committee would like to see the City's forestry plan. Paul Hartman said that Mark Freburg will attend next month's meeting. Lynn Austin referenced a community meeting which took place many years ago during the establishment of Olde Main Street, regarding whether or not trees should be planted in the greenspace on the north side of Main Street between Ellis and Newhall. Lynn said that Mayor Jadin wanted to sell the property for commercial lots, but the neighborhood voted unanimously for the area to remain greenspace. The neighborhood was in favor of landscaping the area and planting trees, but the greenspace was never planted. A few years ago, Lynn said, there was a meeting at the NWTC building on Cedar St. with an employee of the Parks Department, to discuss whether the Main St. greenspace should be considered an official park and given a name. Previously, the greenspace and surrounding area was labeled as "Oak Grove" on the plat map of the area. Lynn suggested that the City should plant trees where they once grew naturally. Several members observed that there are occasionally complaints about certain trees because of their seeds. However, many trees produce edible seeds, such as acorns and walnuts, which could be harvested; this would solve the problem of natural debris. It was also observed that native trees could attract desirable wildlife.

Jim Sanderson said that due to removal of trees, there is no uniform canopy through the City, and voiced a complaint about the City's widespread removal of trees. Paul explained that the City practices preventative removal—trees are cut down as soon as they display signs of poor health. It was suggested that a list of the City's oldest and largest trees should be compiled, in order to encourage good stewardship of our environmental assets (similar to the efforts to protect the City's historic buildings), since these trees would not be able to be replaced again during our lifetime.

Jim Sanderson asked Dave Nenning about the Green Bay Historic Preservation Commission's role, specifically whether or not they take an active role in helping citizens research historic buildings and locations. He also wanted to know who appointed the Commission. Dave says the

Commission is struggling to define their position, and that he cannot speak for them. Commission members are appointed by the Mayor.

Discussion turned to the attempted demolition of the old Brown County Museum in the late 1980's. Dave Nenning said that the people wanted a county-wide museum, and Brown County and the City of Green Bay collaborated on the project. Jim Sanderson said they abandoned the original east-side historic property in favor of occupying valuable riverfront property.

Lynn Austin brought up when the City took down a block of shops downtown, including Kaap's, against the wishes of the public, in order to provide parking space for the Boston Store, which later moved away. She also listed the Five-Six nightclub as another example. She said that the City needs to have more loyalty to its local businesses and long-time residents rather than fly-by-night commercial enterprises.

Discussion turned to the City plans for a kayak launch at the City dock on the Fox River, as well as another launch on the East River at Main and St. George Street. Jim O'Rourke said that it's the goal of the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway to get people on the waterways, because increased traffic will encourage clean-up of the water.

Lynn said that she and Muriel Austin attended the League of Women Voters' meeting at Bay Beach. The water appears to be surprisingly clean. The intention is to build a beach and cover the existing rocks with sand. Jim O'Rourke observed that the clean-up of Bay Beach will positively impact the rivers and waterways. Dave Nennig said that the Mayor supports the Bay Beach project, and he mentioned that the Friends of Bay Beach are renovating the pavilion. He also said that Renard Island (which is owned by Brown County) was originally considered for a possible extension of the Bay Beach shore (which is owned by the City), with a causeway out to the island at Sauk Avenue.

Paul Hartman mentioned that the East River Trail group is struggling to find funding to continue. The East River trail would merge with the Allouez trail. Dave Nennig said that a recent bond issue approved by the City included funds for the demolition of empty buildings that the City has already purchased along the East River to make way for the trail. Jim O'Rourke pointed out that if the trails are all connected, it will be more convenient for people to go out walking and bike-riding, and consequently there will be an increase of recreational traffic. Jim Sanderson mentioned that the old on-ramp from Highway 41 to Highway 43 will become a trail out to Suamico once the Tower Drive renovations are done.

The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM. Next month's meeting is scheduled for August 4.

Respectfully submitted,

Muriel Austin