

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
May 3, 2016
Aging & Disability Resource Center, 300 Adams Street
4:00 PM

Members Present: Paul Hartman, Marian Ripp, Lynn Austin, Mike Spencer, and Muriel Austin.

Also Present: Mary Jo Scanlan, and Ray Scanlan.

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

Mary Jo and Ray Scanlan came as representatives of the Preble Park Neighborhood Association, which is composed of approximately 900 households. Tom DeWayne is their area's alderman. The boundaries of the Preble Park Association are within Bader Street, Newberry Street, and Mason Street, in the area north of East Town Mall. Paul Hartman inquired whether Mary Jo and Ray are interested in representing their district. Paul said representatives from all areas are desired.

The Committee discussed the removal of 190 trees, some fifty years old, along Skyline Boulevard. Mary Jo said this was a terrible result of the City not considering the future consequences and potential negative impact of decisions made. In this case citizens no longer have rights; their rights have been given to the power company. Mary Jo wants to do something about this issue, but needs more information.

Paul Hartman suggested planting smaller trees that wouldn't interfere with power lines. Lynn Austin suggested underground power lines, or getting the power company to sign an agreement in order to prevent clear-cutting. Mary Jo said the trees were trimmed for years, and questioned why the company would cut all of them down now. She also said that the City doesn't maintain its historic markers, and mentioned the Preble Park Historical Marker at the corner of Hillside Lane and Skyline Boulevard as an example. Lynn Austin mentioned that the angle of certain roads designates the old Preble boundary line from the original boundary of Green Bay.

Mary Jo wanted to know the history of the Beautification Committee. Lynn said that she has not been able to get the Beautification pages posted on the City website. The Committee was founded by the League of Women Voters, because of quality of life issues—specifically concerns about severe coal dust pollution in the area. Lynn said the air is worse on the east side of the city, due to the prevailing winds that come from the west. Mary Jo commented on problems in the past regarding Packerland Packing, and the terrible smells and loose bulls that her father, a former civic leader, had dealt with.

Lynn Austin brought maps dating from 1917 to show the Committee. She received digital copies of the maps from the Chicago Northwestern Railroad's archives, and had them printed at Green Bay Blue. She also brought several photos of old Green Bay to see if committee members could identify them. It was suggested that she ask Jim Sanderson about the photos.

Paul Hartman said that the Committee should focus on things we want to accomplish. He mentioned the routine spring-cleaning and undesirable trees to be cut down. An invasive species abatement is scheduled for May 19, and there are plans for a new park on the Fox River Trail, on the border of Allouez and DePere at the Fox Point boat landing.

Lynn Austin spoke about some of the accomplishments of our past mayors regarding the preservation of history. Arthur Neville and his father were both mayors, and had set up monuments and worked to preserve Tank Cottage.

Mike Spencer asked about the high wires on Titledown Brewery's Larsen Green project and where the half-acre designated for "historical purposes" would be situated. He expressed relief that the property was not sold to Walmart. Lynn Austin said she will inquire about the half-acre. The location of Leicht Park was originally wetlands until more recent years, and is unlikely to be the site of historic settlement. A portion of the Hurlbut Company's land is likely the location of the Fort Howard warehouse. The high wires carry power to other buildings on Broadway St.

Lynn Austin said she spoke with a restaurant employee at a Broadway business, who said that the Titledown owner plans to install clubs to increase the nightlife. Committee members expressed the opinion that the City doesn't seem to learn from its past mistakes, since Mayor Jaden was trying to clean up Broadway and now the City is going in the opposite direction and undoing those efforts. Lynn Austin compared the Main Street problems and the negative impact of having too many nightclubs and taverns; she said more bars make an area rougher. Over time women tend to begin avoiding rough areas, and eventually it has a bad effect on neighborhood commerce, because the other businesses suffer.

Mike Spencer mentioned that in the 1990's they were trying to remove bars from Broadway, and he suggested also removing liquor stores; it was very good progress, and we should want to preserve that.

Lynn Austin said we might as well have had a Walmart rather than a lot of bars. She asked why we can't have educational and cultural things instead, and expressed the opinion that there's very little in our downtown that's appropriate for families.

Mike Spencer said the Neville Museum used to have things for children. He said there aren't any inexpensive community projects, and many young people don't seem to care about the community, and aren't interested in investing their time or effort in preserving it.

Lynn Austin said that the City needs to make it a goal for the downtown to be more family-friendly. She stopped going to the Wednesday afternoon Farmer's Market on Broadway because she said it's more of a party than a Farmer's Market, considering all of the establishments that sell alcohol. Nobody wants to be around drunken people, especially in the middle of the day; it's not a comfortable atmosphere. Broadway business owners complained about people bringing their alcohol into the shops with them during the Farmer's Market. Lynn said she began going to the Saturday morning Farmer's Market to avoid the many people drinking. She observed that

citizens should be provided with plenty of other, more positive things to spend their money on, rather than just alcohol.

Mike Spencer brought up the success story of the trail system. Everyone agreed that trails are very nice. He said He-Nis-Ra Park is also really nice, but there hasn't been much done there lately.

Discussion moved to the property underneath the Ashland Ave viaduct (previously a railroad yard). The Committee agreed that we need to suggest a park to the City, before they put in more concrete. The Ashland viaduct was originally a slough, and it's a bad idea to build on a potential flood area—but it could be made into a very attractive park, which could also serve as a flood prevention site, since trees soak up water like sponges. A park with lots of trees could prevent or lessen water damage to houses in the adjoining neighborhoods. Lynn Austin said the City needs to seek out a "green" City Planning director.

Mike Spencer mentioned the petition against Sanimax. Originally the plant was quite small, but it gradually grew and increased in size; plants like this get bigger, such as the expansion of the meatpacking plants, as communities continue to grow up around them. Eventually people complained. The area is Pat Evans' district, and he was looking for help from Brown County to tell Sanimax to do something about the smell, but the effort was not successful. Howard is a higher income area, so the threat of a lawsuit probably helps to provide some incentive for Sanimax to clean up the offensive odors.

The meeting concluded at 5:40 PM. Next month's meeting is scheduled for June 7.

Respectfully submitted,

Muriel Austin