

**CITY OF BILOXI
TREE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Location: Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (769 Howard Avenue, Biloxi)
Time: 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

August 12, 2019

Call to Order 4:00 pm

I. **Members in attendance**— Robin Rodolfich (1), Geneva Dummer (4), and Chair Carroll Campbell (5)

II. **Public Citizens Present**— Deanne Nuwer, Sherri Munter

III. **Public Comment**—

A. Deanne Nuwer questioned the reason for pink ribbons on trees near Atkinson and Popp's Ferry, whether they were being cut for a turning lane or to be saved, and whether the Fire Department would approve houses that close together. Additionally, she is disheartened by a unanimous vote by City Council to authorize a change in Zoning District Classification for the Bertucci Property. Regarding Eagle Point, she noted that trees are being hauled off.

Sherri Munter praised the handling of development at Fort Bayou estates in OS because of the high rate of tree retention there, and asked why Biloxi doesn't also require developers to retain more trees, but instead allows what is essentially clear cutting.

Deanne proposes that we need public education about trees and their role in sustainable communities. One idea is that tree education flyers be put in utility bills

B. Tree Committee Response to public comments— The Tree Committee reminded all that the Director of Community Development, Public Works, and the City Arborists would be the correct ones to contact regarding lot density, the meaning of pink ribbons, the reason for the removal of trees, etc, and citizens should exercise their responsibility of regularly attending and speaking out at City Council meetings, as well as writing to or calling their respective Council Member.

However, Carroll has looked into these items and learned the following:

- According to the CA, pink ribbons mean that trees have been counted. He is unaware of the development plans of the property at Atkinson and Popp's Ferry since these have not yet been presented to City Council. Carroll replied with her findings to the citizen.
- Carroll will check the status of Eagle Point and report back at the next meeting.

IV. Ongoing Business

A. Action Tracking

Updates—

- 1) Eagle Point—Added to Action Tracking to understand why the tree committee has not yet been involved.
- 2) Big Play— Robin reported that in a recent DRC meeting, the Race Track Site Plan was reviewed. The proposed site plan would remove a number of protected trees. The DRC requested the plan be redrawn and resubmitted to accommodate these trees.

B. Site Visits & Recommendations

- 1) Bertucci: CA confirmed the site visit will take place when the tree inventory is complete.
- 2) Fun Time: Still no date has been set for this.
- 3) Beach Blvd RV Park: No status update provided.
- 4) Woolkmarket Community Center: According to comments made at a recent DRC meeting, plans to plant mitigation trees are off the table at this time. Carroll will investigate the reason for this and whether it is allowed by the LDO.

B. PR / Communications Update

- 1) Robin Rodolfich (Ward 1) will reach out to Gary Bachmann about doing a segment on trees in Biloxi, possibly writing articles that can go into B-News.
- 2) Geneva Dummer (Ward 4) reported that the City does not want to manage another Facebook Page. Vincent Creel and Cecilia Dobbs have already agreed to help get the tree protection message out through B-Mail, Facebook, podcasts, etc. The Tree Committee must develop an education plan and get the materials to the City's PR team (Vincent Creel and Cecilia Dobbs).

A Committee Member overseeing Public Relations and Education will be assigned at the September meeting.

- 3) Biloxi's Majestic Tree Program.
The Tree Committee is commissioned by the LDO to assist the City in establishing this program.

Robin Rodolfich (Ward 1) shared information regarding the Hancock County Tree Registry's program which can be found online at the [Hancock Historical Society's](#) webpage. The program provides criteria for tree registration including size, setting, history which was established by the The Society of Trees or *Societe des Arbres*. If a tree doesn't qualify for registration it can be measured and recognized, but no certificate is issued. For the Hancock County program, it takes up to 6 months from application to receipt of certificate. The program costs citizens \$10 per designation and plaque to run this program.

Mary Ann Westfall manages the Hancock program and says that it requires quite a bit of volunteer time to manage the program, and postage runs about \$5 per plaque which is not covered by the application fee.

As Biloxi considers a Majestic Tree program, it should also consider postage.

Other possible resources that could help with a Biloxi Majestic Tree program include:

- a) MSU Extension Services may have resource agents who can verify tree quality.
- b) MSU Extension's Master Naturalist program. Graduates of the program are required to serve 40 hours of volunteer time to maintain certification.

Geneva will contact Eric Sparks, Master Naturalist with Extension Service to get ideas for ways the City might set up Biloxi's Majestic Tree program to include Master Naturalists.

A Committee Member overseeing Biloxi's Majestic Tree Program will be assigned at the September meeting.

V. Current Business

- A. Open Positions: Tree Committee Chair, and Wards 6 & 7 Representative—Mr. Glavan has submitted three names to mayor, and he is following up. Mr. Barrett has not submitted any names.
- B. Mitigation & LDO Progress. There has been no progress to date. The Committee is waiting on draft verbiage from the CA.
- C. Brochure for use in DRC and Planning Commission—No one has heard back from the CA regarding approval or disapproval. Carrol will follow up.
- D. Barhonovich Park Live Oak Plantings— After discussion, the Committee is not sure whether we should pursue this as infrastructure work may have to be done on Porter Ave. Potential soccer field sight. The Committee agreed to remove this item from it's agenda, but can remain ready to assist Councilman Lawrence with activities in this park in the future if that is needed.
- E. Semi-annual Report—The report has been drafted and is still undergoing revision before sending to the City Arborist and Director of Community Development.
- F. Members at Large—Carroll proposes to establish Members at Large positions, but moved this can be tabled until after all positions have been filled. All voted in favor.

VI. Meeting Adjourned: Estimated at 5:00 p.m.