

Committee Members:

Chairperson

Damian Huettl, Citizen
Term: 2013-2016

Vice Chairperson

Laurie Leingang, Citizen
Term: 2013-2016

Tammy Lapp-Harris, Citizen
Term: 2015-2018

Amy Schmidt, Citizen
Term: 2015-2018

Brian Dehnert, Citizen
Term: 2016-2019

Vacant
Term: 2016-2019

Jim Neubauer,
Administration

Doug Lalim, Building
Inspection

Ellen Huber, Business
Development &
Communications

Keith Johnson, Custer
Health

Steve Nardello, Fire

Justin Froseth, Planning &
Engineering

Jason Ziegler, Police

Jeff Wright, Public Works

Liaisons:

Robert Decker, City
Planner

Joe Camisa, Code
Enforcement Officer

Krista Harju, Program
Coordinator

Mandan Community Beautification Committee

Thursday, January 14, 2016

7:30 a.m.

Mandan City Hall

205 Second Avenue NW

A. Roll Call:

1. Roll call of committee members and liaisons
Chairman Damian Huettl called the meeting to order. Members indicated with a were in attendance. Also in attendance was City Arborist Kaiden Straabe.

B. Consider minutes from meeting held Dec. 10, 2015
Laurie Leingang moved to approve the minutes from the Dec. 10, 2015 meeting. Neubauer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Update on vacant position with term of 2016-2019 for members of the public (citizens or business representatives)
Ellen Huber provided an update on the one vacant position on the committee. No letters of interest were received. She recommended seeking letters of interest through advertisement. Neubauer asked committee members to encourage possible candidates to submit letters of interest.

Leingang noted a suggestion was made at the last meeting to include a park district representative, but the committee never completed the discussion. She asked for more input from city representatives. Neubauer asked if she wants to extend an invitation to a Park District. Lalim said the discussion stemmed from possible project discussions, because the Park District has a significant amount of land and trails. Leingang noted it might not be necessary to have a Park District representative at all meetings, and suggested inviting one to participate when appropriate.

D. Consider revised language in a proposed garbage container ordinance (Would like to move this item to Feb. in order for further staff discussion)

Johnson moved to postpone discussion on agenda items D, E, and F to February. Neubauer seconded. He further suggested city staff focus on addressing community concerns regarding recycling before introducing new garbage container and outdoor storage ordinances. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Consider revised language in a proposed ordinance for outdoor storage in industrial, commercial and residential properties.

See Item D.

F. Update on status of presentation of summary to City Commission regarding proposed property maintenance code (Would like to move this item to Feb. in order for further staff discussion)

See Item D.

G. Brainstorming of future projects and activities

Dehnert suggested looking at project possibilities for the area adjacent to Longfellow Park. Neubauer said a landscape designer has offered to put in some stormwater ponds. The City and Park District have agreed that if the City plants grass or trees the Park District would maintain the area. Dehnert suggested exploring what can be done to the river bank along the park to keep weeds out. A city poll indicated community members would prefer the following additions to the park: events or activities, fishing areas, park shelter/picnic tables, play equipment and public art.

Dehnert noted there are no structures to draw people to the park. He suggested adding a shelter and some barbecues. Neubauer suggested additional parking. Dehnert suggested allowing residents to purchase memorial benches. Trees could also be planted. Neubauer noted the cemetery committee is similarly looking at the idea of memorial tree plantings and benches in approved areas.

Leingang suggested projects that would beautify downtown business district. Huber said there's been discussion about expanding the special treatment given to intersections that were torn up during the remediation to other intersections. This included the bulbout areas with masonry kiosks, benches and trash receptacles, plantings and the retro-style pedestrian street lights along First Street. Huber also suggested doing something similar to Bismarck's wrapping utility boxes with art. Krista Harju noted the past idea of planters on Main Street.

Dehnert suggested focusing on beautifying the Memorial Bridge and Memorial Highway entrance. Neubauer noted it is federal highway property and there are a lot of layers to go through. Neubauer will invite N.D. Department of Transportation Bismarck District Director Kevin Levi to talk about potential options. Dehnert also suggested speaking with the Lower Heart Water Resource District about the area around the 6th Avenue SE bridge.

Schmidt would like to focus on litter and decreasing it. Survey results from a question about property maintenance issues in 2012 indicated concern about litter. She likes the community clean-up day. She doesn't know if there are laws regarding littering in Mandan. She would like to see stricter laws and/or enforcement. She suggested putting up signs discouraging littering and encouraging a beautiful city. She also wants every resident to have heavy duty garbage totes.

Schmidt wants to see more boulevard trees in the newer developments. Straabe has had discussions about possibly requiring developers to plant trees or providing the City with funding to plant trees. He said Williston requires \$200 per lot for tree planting. He said there are some obstacles to implementing this requirement, such as utility lines and the size of the boulevard. Straabe also noted that it can be helpful if the homeowner has made some payment toward the trees to increase commitment to being responsible for long-term maintenance.

Tammy Lapp-Harris suggested hanging flower baskets from the light poles downtown. Decker noted the biggest issue is the maintenance. She dislikes the advertising on the benches in the downtown area. Decker suggested revisiting the agreement regarding these benches.

Dehnert recommended enhanced spring clean-up. He suggested getting the gravel off of the medians in entrance areas in the spring.

Huettl wants to see landscaping in the Memorial Highway entrance to the city. A landscaping ordinance passed in 2015 does require some landscaping. Businesses can receive up to \$30,000 in matching funds for storefront and landscaping improvements. Huber recommended continuing to promote the program, which also benefits the downtown area. Camisa noted that some of the issues observed on Memorial Highway are or will be addressed through code enforcement. Assistance from Custer Health is needed for some issues. There was discussion about further promoting the Memorial Highway Storefront and Landscape Improvement Program. Huber had sent a mailing to all known property owners and businesses when the program was launched. Neubauer suggested sending a color flyer to them with photos of the first two projects after completion. Huber will research a real estate type sign for potential display in front of projects.

City staff will send out the list of potential projects out to committee members. Committee members will then respond with project preference and how to prioritize projects.

H. Staff reports on recommendations regarding rodent harborage. *See IPC 302.5.*

Camisa said rodent harborage is generally covered under existing health and property maintenance codes. If a serious health concern is present, he can work with the health department to ensure it is addressed.

Leingang said she knows of a property that may have been infested by mice due to a neighbor stacking wood. Camisa said he can address many exterior issues, including piles of tree branches, tall grasses, or holes in the exterior of buildings, but he cannot enforce anything on the inside of a structure. If implemented, the property maintenance code could further help address issues of rodent harborage.

Leingang would like to see language specifically addressing rodent harborage, so that people know it's their responsibility. Decker said the City does not have the ability to enforce it and recommended working with the health department on rodent concerns.

Huber recommended not taking action at this meeting and waiting to hear Keith Johnson's recommendation as to whether Mandan's existing code is sufficient or whether the language from the International Property Maintenance Code should be incorporated into the proposed property maintenance ordinance.

I. Staff reports on recommendations regarding Dutch Elm and Ash Borer Disease.

Leingang noted a chapter on Dutch Elm disease exists in the nuisance code. Straabe said the language is up to par. Most people do not plant American Elms, because they are aware of the disease. There is currently no language prohibiting the planting of American Elm or Ash trees, but it's difficult to find the tree varieties. Straabe said language could be added to the code that would prohibit the planting of these tree varieties on private property.

Some states do not allow Ash trees or wood to enter the state. Bismarck advises people not to bring firewood to the community from out of town, as emerald ash borers (beetles) can be transferred on the firewood. The ash borer is not in North Dakota yet, but it will be. It has been seen in Minnesota. There are many Green Ash trees in Mandan. Straabe projected the community will be hit hard by ash borer disease in the near future. Huber suggested focusing on public education, including information in the Mandan Messenger about not bringing wood into the area and instead buying locally.

Johnson recommended coordinating with county parks and the state park, as the most active possibilities are people who are camping and may bring firewood from home.

Huettl suggested it is issue the state legislature should address, regarding the transportation of wood over state lines. Johnson said the City is better off adopting a local code. Even if the state passes something, it is easier to enforce if something exists at a local level.

Neubauer recommended proactively prohibiting the planting of Green Ash, Black Ash and White Ash. Straabe was asked to draft a proposed ordinance.

Johnson recommended creating a program to help replace trees affected by disease that were removed by the City. Straabe provided information on the City's PARDS program, which offers reimbursement of \$50 per tree, a maximum of \$300 per lot. Last year, the program only raised \$650. The city matches donations using funds in the forestry budget. He would like for the Community Beautification Committee to help in securing donations. Huber recommended publishing information about the program in a business brief e-mail and the Mandan Messenger.

Neubauer suggested selecting an area that was affected by Dutch Elm disease and trying to raise donations to replenish the supply of trees on the boulevard in the area. Straabe said it would be important to gauge the interest of property owners, before taking on such a project. A healthy tree costs about \$200. He noted many property owners have asked him to replace removed trees at the cost of the City. Huber asked if it is best to adapt the program to pay for the entire cost of replacement or only provide the existing PARDS reimbursement of \$50 per tree.

Kaiden said there is a community development program through the North Dakota Forest Service that will reimburse a percentage of dollars spent on trees. It requires an application. The City has participated in the program in the past, using the funding for removal of trees affected by Dutch Elm disease. The City has received at least \$20,000 from the program.

Straabe anticipates cutting between 30 and 70 trees from boulevards in 2016. About 60 trees were cut down in 2015. It costs about \$200 to replace a tree. There are a lot of trees that shouldn't be replaced due to bad location. He would recommend replacing about 80 trees, which would cost about \$16,000.

Neubauer asked Straabe to come back with a plan of replacement and cost estimate. The committee could then focus on helping to raise the funding.

Neubauer asked if a specific area should be targeted or it should remain open to the entire community. Straabe prefers to allow all Mandan residents to use the program. Huber suggested using the PARDS program to help plant new trees and offer a higher rate for replacement of trees cut down due to disease.

Straabe said a lot of people use the PARDS program to replace trees removed due to Dutch Elm disease. He turned away people last year because there was no money. Some people understood and planted anyway. Other people were upset. Huber suggested including an article in the February newsletter asking for donations to the program. Neubauer felt the City may be able to up its contribution to match dollars raised.

There is currently \$3,000 available for matching in the budget. The City will reimburse property owners up to \$50 per tree. Additional dollars may be available if more than \$3,000 is raised. Any donation dollars that remain will roll over into the fund in the following year.

Huber moved the committee support Straabe's recommendation to add language to the ordinance regarding ash borer disease and prohibiting the planting of ash trees. Johnson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Straabe will bring back information to the Feb. meeting on what areas of town would most benefit from the PARDS program and an estimate on how many trees would need to be replaced.

Lapp-Harris asked Straabe to contact other communities to find information on what fundraising efforts they found successful.

Doug Lalim asked if there is any scare regarding the pine beetle. Straabe will check with other communities to see if they are concerned and how they are addressing it.

Dehnert asked if there are any concerns regarding manpower and if companies could donate services instead of funding. Bobcat has a history of providing equipment and manpower for this kind of activity. Straabe said the larger need is for more employees, but he would welcome a donation of

services for projects. Huber recommended also contacting Tesoro to see if they are still participating in annual tree planting programs.

J. Other Business

K. Future Meetings

1. Thursday, February 11, 2016, 7:30 a.m.
2. Thursday, March 10, 2016, 7:30 a.m.

L. Adjourn

Leingang moved the meeting adjourn. Neubauer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. *Community Clean-up Day (begin discussions in February 2016)*
2. *Consider signage to discourage littering*

ACTION ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. *Neubauer will invite N.D. Department of Transportation Bismarck District Director Kevin Levi to talk about potential options for beautifying DOT entrances into the city.*
2. *City staff will send a list of potential projects to committee members. Committee members will then respond, indicating project preference and prioritization.*
3. *Keith Johnson will provide recommendations on rodent harborage concerns.*
4. *Straabe will provide a plan for replacement of trees affected by Dutch Elm disease and cost estimate.*
5. *Straabe will provide information on areas of town that would benefit most from the PARDS program.*
6. *Strabbe and Decker will draft language prohibiting the planting of Ash and American Elm trees.*
7. *Straabe will contact other communities for information on what fundraising efforts were successful for the PARDS program.*