

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
ST. CHARLES CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION
January 9, 2013

Members Present: Chair English, Vice Chair Schuetz, Potts, and Dechene

Members Absent: Kane

City Staff Present: Matthew O'Rourke

Others Present: Lou Little and Royanne Oehlerking

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair English at 7:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Schuetz and seconded by Dechene to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Kane.

Motion Carried.

3. Approval of minutes from December 5, 2012

A motion was made by Schuetz and seconded by Potts to approve the December 5, 2012 minutes of the Corridor Improvement Commission.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Kane; Members Abstain: Dechene.

Motion Carried.

4. Discussion

A. 116 State Avenue (Antique Store)

Chair English summarized that the Commission had surveyed the downtown area last June or July and that the Commission thought this property was a good location for a grant. Member Dechene asked where the property was located. O'Rourke explained that it was located at the northwest corner of 2nd and State Avenues.

Chair English asked O'Rourke to outline the grant approval process for Ms. Little and Ms. Oehlerking. O'Rourke explained that this program is called the Four Season program which

is a grant for \$1,000 dollars and that there is no matching funding required. O'Rourke also explained that the applicant has already submitted their grant application and that at this point a plan needs to be generated. He further stated that the Commission has some general ideas and would like to discuss these with the applicant before a plan is created. O'Rourke explained that once there is a plan the Corridor Improvement Commission will make a recommendation that is forwarded to the Planning and Development Committee, once the P & D Committee makes their recommendation the City Council will vote on approval of the grant.

Vice Chair Schuetz stated that the Commission would like to know what types of plant species Ms. Little prefers. Ms. Little stated that she wants something that is appropriate to the historical character of the building, so things like grasses are not appropriate. She also is cautious to not plant roses due to the Japanese beetle. She would prefer low maintenance such as hostas and stated that the property stays very dry due to the drainage, steep slope, and composition of the soil on the property.

Member Potts asked if she is thinking more period such as bridle wreath spirea and lilacs. Vice Chair Schuetz mentioned boxwoods. Ms. Little stated that they already have a circle of boxwoods and that there are a number of them throughout the property. She also stated there is a tiered garden look to the property

Vice Chair Schuetz mentioned that there is a lot of sun on the corner of the property and that the Commission should bear this in mind.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked where Ms. Little would like to supplement or add plants. Chair English explained that the grant can go anywhere on Ms. Little's property anywhere between the sidewalk and the front of the building on either 2nd or State Avenues. O'Rourke explained that the plantings will need to have street visibility to satisfy the requirements of the grant program.

Ms. Little stated that there are lilacs and other plants at the northeast corner of the property that are in need of pruning. Chair English asked Ms. Little if she has considered lavender. Ms. Little stated that she has not.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked if Ms. Little would have any interest in placing a shade tree near the corner to provide more options for planting. Ms. Little stated that she would prefer not to block the building.

Ms. Little stated that she has had issues with plant materials near her driveway and the corner of the property due to road salt from winter plowings. She also stated that there is a lot of traffic that passes by the property with people going to the park. Ms. Oehlerking pointed out that there is a concern with trucks that cut the corner and jump the curb. Chair English clarified that this grant would only be on the private property side of the sidewalk and that the area near the curb is not eligible for the grant.

Member Potts asked Ms. Little what her #1 area to be improved would be and then they could look at other areas based on the available funds. Ms. Little stated that her #1 area of

concern would be the area near the stone wall. Vice Chair Schuetz asked if Ms. Little takes care of the maintenance. She said that she currently rents the property and that it is the responsibility of the renters, but that she would take a more active role if she utilized City money.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked if Ms. Little had considered daylilies. She said that they have, but not had a lot of success. Member Potts asked if her preference was to simply enhance the plants that are near the stone area. Ms. Little said that would be her preference to start.

Member Potts asked if she is thinking perennials or bushes. Ms. Little stated that she is looking for low maintenance and species that do not have to be watered frequently. Member Potts stated that there is sedum on the hilly area. Vice Chair Schuetz suggested autumn joy. Member Potts was thinking that they could add some additional varieties of sedum as it is draught, salt, and sand tolerant. Members Potts suggested picking species that will help provide accent colors.

Chair English asked Member Potts what was her opinion of yucca. Member Potts stated that they do fine and are low maintenance. Ms. Little stated that you do need to find the right choice so they do not have to be watered constantly. Chair English stated that sedum is hearty specie. Ms. Little stated that she likes sedum.

Member Potts stated that another tough plant species to consider is called a veronica and blooms from June to September.

Ms. Little explained that there are a number of nice species around the property and would like to supplement those as best as possible.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked if we are going to look at the grassy area without much plant materials. Member Potts suggested that they add some color and then based on where the budget is they could add plants in the other areas. Member Potts asked about hydrangea and if there are any on the property. Ms. Little stated that there are some on the stone wall area and others dispersed throughout the property. Members Potts stated that they have developed new varieties that do not droop as much and are heartier to help incorporate more color.

Vice Chair Schuetz suggested adding some ground cover near the sidewalk and front door of the building. Vice Chair Schuetz wanted to clarify if there is interest in this area. Ms. Little said that it would be hard due to the maintenance concerns. Chair English suggested the endless summer hydrangea. Ms. Little stated that she likes the white varieties of the hydrangea.

Chair English asked Member Potts if she has a pretty good idea of what species Ms. Little would like to plant on the site and where. Member Potts stated that she did. Chair English asked member Potts if she would be able to meet with the applicant on the site and help develop a plan. Member Potts stated that she would be willing to set something up.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked if the applicant would be adding any funds to the \$1,000 grant. Ms. Little stated that she has a lot of plants at her private residence that she can split and add to the materials that way. Member Potts stated that she would be able to go by the property

this week and come up with some ideas and put together a rough estimate. Chair English asked Member Potts if she would have some ideas by next meeting. Member Potts stated that she would.

B. 108 S. Second Street (Doc Morgan)

Member Potts stated that she has talked with Pam Bierman and has a meeting with her later this week. She said she is really concerned about the juniper trees in front of the building and was going to ask Ms. Bierman how she felt about removing them. Vice Chair Schuetz stated that Ms. Bierman did not want them. Member Potts stated that there are some euonymus near the parking garage and south of the parking lot. Member Potts also stated that there is a good bit of stonework in the front of the building that could help create some design interest. Member Potts stated that she would like to have the junipers removed

Vice Chair Schuetz asked what should be installed in place of the junipers. Member Potts stated that she Ms. Bierman is fond of hostas. Vice Chair Schuetz stated that there is not much shade. Member Potts suggested focusing on the front of the building; in particular, the entryway. She further stated that there needs to be some height but there is also a concern regarding the existing windows on the front façade. Member Potts expressed some concerns regarding removal of the juniper and not being able to fill up the vacant spaces left by that removal.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked if she was thinking about any evergreens. Member Potts stated that they do need some evergreen maybe boxwoods, but that they also need to worry about the summer heat combined with the exhaust heat and also salt in the winter.

Member Dechene asked what to do to compliment the green colors of the building. Member Potts suggested a blue-green juniper. Vice Chair Schuetz suggested some yews.

Vice Chair Schuetz suggested some amelanchiers to add height. Member Potts said yes this could help fill in the void created by removing the junipers.

Member Potts suggested the following species to consider: prairie fire crabs, grasses, lilacs, hydrangeas, alpine currant, cotoneasters, cranberry viburnum, and black or red chokeberry preferably black.

Chair English stated that Ms. Bierman seemed to be willing to contribute some funds as well to help bolster the plan. Members Potts stated that maybe she purchase one of the amelanchiers or possibly plant one in a subsequent year. O'Rourke suggested the possibility of a phased approach similar to the McDowell grant where some of the more important plantings are placed first and then others get filled in in later years. Member Potts suggested having the applicant pay for the mulch.

Vice Chair suggested narrowing down the list of potential plants. Member Potts Agreed. The Commission decided to suggest the following species:

- Ornamental Trees: amelanchier or crab.
- Shrubs color: lilacs and hydrangeas.

- Shrubs green: alpine currant, black chokeberry, and euonymus to tie the property together.
- Perennials: autumn joy sedum.
- Grasses: Karl foerster and north wind panicum.
- Evergreen: dwarf blue spruce and junipers (sergeant or blue pacific).

C. Wilson Travel

Member Potts stated that she had visited the site and met with the property owner. Member Potts stated that there are a lot of existing shrubs along 2nd Avenue that are in need of dormant pruning. She further stated that there are some older junipers and yews that need to be removed and replaced with ground cover. Member Potts stated pachysandra would work well as a ground cover in this area.

Members Potts suggested that they help pay for the removal of the junipers and the yews and replace them with some hydrangea and the owner pay for the dormant pruning of the 2nd Avenue Plants. The Commission agreed that this was good course of action.

5. Additional Business

O'Rourke stated that he wanted to gauge the Commission and see how they felt about expanding the scope of the grant program and mentioned this is a very preliminary discussion at this point. O'Rourke stated that in conjunction with some of the recommendations in the update to the comprehensive plan and upcoming sign amortization that there may be some opportunities to take on more permanent improvements. Chair English stated that this was the original intent of the Commission when it was first created.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked what type of improvements would the Commission be considering? O'Rourke stated it would be items like assisting with closing unnecessary curb cuts and replacing it with landscaping. O'Rourke mentioned that there are a number of signs that need to be removed due to an upcoming amortization. The grants could expand to helping property owners with the required landscaping around their replacement signs or hardscaping.

The Commission agreed it is worth exploring these options to expand the scope of the program.

6. Announcement and Upcoming Meetings

Next CIC Meeting – February 6, 2013

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Schuetz and seconded by Dechene to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Kane.
Motion Carried