

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
ST. CHARLES CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION
September 7, 2016**

Members Present: Chair English, Vice Chair Schuetz, Kane, Pietryla, Potts, Dechene and Hauser

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Matthew O'Rourke – Economic Development Division Manager

Others Present: Julie Lundeen – Lundeen's
George Neri – Neri Landscape & Design

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair English at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Vice Chair Schuetz and seconded by Hauser to approve the September 7, 2016 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting Agenda.

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

Motion Carried.

3. Approval of June 8, 2016 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Schuetz and seconded by Pietryla to approve the June 8, 2016 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting Minutes.

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

Motion Carried.

4. Corridor Grants

A. Corridor Improvement Grant – 1315 W. Main Street (Lundeen's)

Ms. Lundeen introduced Mr. George Neri of Neri Landscape & Design. Mr. Neri had met with City staff prior to this meeting and brought with him a landscape design of what the minimum landscape requirement would be. Chair English asked if their rezoning has been

approved. Ms. Lundeen said they are in the middle of that and would not begin the landscape project until March 2017 at the earliest. Currently, they are waiting receipt of their No Further Remediation (NFR) Letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that they filed for in the summer. O'Rourke clarified with Ms. Lundeen that she was not planning on having the landscape plan/grant to be approved on Monday, September 12th. Ms. Lundeen stated that she has not reached that point yet.

Mr. Neri passed out copies of the landscape plan to all members with both Ms. Lundeen and Mr. Neri stating that they welcome any suggestions and guidance. On the 14th Street side, it shows the double drive entrance has been closed off and the City suggested they keep a portion of grass in the landscape along 14th Street for salt issues. This would also prevent the landscape from washing into the street, stated Chair English. Mr. Neri referred to the landscape plans – explaining some of the plantings they would incorporate: *Black-eyed Susan's*, *Karl Forester Grass*, a hedge of *Dwarf Lilac*, *Hydrangea's*, *Little Blue Stem*, a *Serviceberry* with *Daylilies* going around the perimeter, and two *Blue Spruce* in the corner of the property. The *Serviceberry* and *Blue Spruce* would meet the tree requirements for this property and everything would cover at least 75 % of linear feet as well as being 3 feet high at maturity for blockage. Mr. Neri also provided photographs of all of the plants as well as the associated cost.

O'Rourke clarified that when they are talking about meeting the zoning ordinance code requirements – you are required to have 75% of the frontage landscaped and 50% of this has to be 30 inches tall. Also, you are also required to have one type of tree – ornamental, evergreen or shade per every linear 50 feet. The way the ordinance was rewritten a few years ago, the City can help pay for the items the Zoning Ordinance requires but the applicant must go above and beyond the minimum code. Chair English commented that all of the items they have selected are all very hardy and suggested intermixing something that would provide color earlier in the season before *Black-eyed Susan's* come to full bloom in August and September. Mr. Neri stated that there will be *Daylilies* in that area - Mr. Neri and Ms. Potts thought *Allium* or *Peek-a-boo Daylilies* might also be good additions.

Mr. Neri said he may build a wall along the back side of the property and have a foot high berm in that area to build it up a bit and add some out-cropping. His understanding was that the berm could not be over a foot high because of the utilities. This berm would be located in a sunny area of the property and Ms. Potts suggested adding some yellow *Sedum* groundcover in there for color. Mr. O'Rourke thought another option would be to add some decorative fencing in that location.

Chair English asked Ms. Potts and Ms. Dechene what plant varieties they would suggest adding to the overall landscape plan. Ms. Dechene asked how committed Mr. Neri was to having *Karl Forester Grasses*. He stated that his other option would be *Prairie Dropseed*. Ms. Dechene suggested *Panicum Virgatum* and Mr. Neri thought that may begin to get too tall and it doesn't stay as neat and close together. Ms. Dechene agreed and stated that both *Prairie Dropseed* and *Panicum Virgatum* are native's and since he will be using some grasses, it would be great to select one of them if possible. Ms. Potts stated that *Black-eyed Susan's* look really great in front of grasses – she suggested maybe opening that bed up a little more and include them in this area too. Chair English mentioned that there is a relatively new office complex on Route 59 near the

tollway, where many native grasses have been used; however, the placement of the grasses has created the look of a formal garden instead of having them spaced less perfectly to look more natural. Ms. Hauser added that when you have plantings displayed in a line – when something fails - it really shows with an open space in that line. Mr. O'Rourke suggested meeting the screening requirement by having them grouped together.

Vice Chair Schuetz confirmed with everyone that the area of where the large planting will be – at the corner of Route 64 and 14th Street – is asphalt. Ms. Lundeen stated that they are aware of that needs to be removed. She added that this is part of the commitment they are making to improve and further enhance this property.

Vice Chair Schuetz asked what kind of evergreens are to be included and why *Black-eyed Susan's* were chosen instead of *Purple Coneflower*. Mr. Neri said there will be three *Juniper Blue Muffin* and two *Blue Spruce* and he chose *Black-eyed Susan's* because he feels they would do better than the *Purple Coneflower* and that they would grow together with the grasses to provide a solid, ground cover effect. The *Colorado Blue Spruce* evergreens were selected to provide additional color. Ms. Potts asked if there was any room to add some lower bushes around the entrance area where the *Blue Spruce* would be located. Mr. Neri said there would be room to add something additional. Vice Chair Schuetz asked how they felt about *White Firs*. Mr. Neri stated that they are normally not as hardy. Ms. Potts said the *Blue Spruce* is as hardy as you can get for the space – even though they will get large. Ms. Lundeen stated that would be fine on that side of the property as it will provide a screen effect. Vice Chair Schuetz suggested adding one more *Blue Spruce*. Mr. O'Rourke said that having one more tree would help them get past the minimum tree requirement.

Ms. Lundeen asked Mr. O'Rourke to explain what they look for with regards to upgrading a landscape project. The reason it is so vague, is that when you are dealing with a landscape project, you never know what you will need, explained Mr. O'Rourke. We are looking for concepts and ideas that go above and beyond plants that minimally meet the requirement. Adding more variety in plants is one way to do it – adding more hardscape features like out-cropping and ornamental fencing is another way – something to create unique visual interest with no monetary minimum in place. Mr. O'Rourke stated that his concern was his budget. The current total amount for this project is \$7,540 with the City's 50% portion being \$3,770. This total could increase with the implementation of suggested plantings by members of the Commission. Mr. O'Rourke said that there is about \$14,000 remaining in this year's budget with one other potential grant to be considered at tonight's meeting. Even if this project is approved during this budget year, the project does not have to be completed until the end of the next fiscal year. Mr. O'Rourke said he would prefer to approve their plan during this fiscal year while he has the money. Mr. Neri will need to submit a revised budget as well as a drawing of their revised landscape plan to present to the Corridor Improvement Commission again.

Mr. Neri asked how the payment of this grant is handled. Mr. O'Rourke stated that this is a matching grant program – 50/50. The City pays half of the total amount except for the design fee - the City pays up to 75% of that. Ms. Lundeen confirmed that they will go back and re-do the design, incorporating as many of their suggestions as possible and go from there. Mr. O'Rourke stated that there could be a few more comments that come out of the next meeting –

the Commission needs to make a formal recommendation and then Mr. O'Rourke will present it at the following P&D Committee Meeting. Mr. Pietryla asked if they could provide more specific guidelines – implement a wall instead of a fence – as an example. Chair English replied that he would prefer to leave that up to the designers to create what they feel looks best. Ms. Kane asked if we would ever pay for anything like a gate. Chair English stated that there would be a good possibility that something like that would be covered. Ms. Kane provided the name of two individuals who could produce something like this if Mr. Neri is interested – Mr. Jim O'Connor and Mr. Keith Allen. Mr. O'Rourke stated that there could be a concern with snow plowing if a gate were to be added – this is a very narrow area. Chair English stated that they will leave it up to the designer – if he feels he can work it in – let him present it to the group.

B. Corridor Improvement Grant – 2601 E. Main Street (Warwick Publishing)

Ms. Potts said that this is a very simple plan. The entire Warwick parking lot was re-surfaced with landscaping implemented over one year ago this fall. They also tore out the sidewalk that went along the foundation and put a curb in there with the distance between the wall and the curb being about 3 ½ feet. All drainage work has been added, all of the water has been tiled, pumped and is going out into the sewers. Now they just want to make this area look clean. Using *Pachysandra*, which is green, and *Carex Grass* – which tolerates shade and this variety would be a bright yellow standing about 12 – 15 inches tall. The windows are about 3 feet tall so you don't want anything too high. Ms. Potts said that she would also add *Limelight Hydrangea's* to give a little more color and a little more height. At either corners and at the entrances, *Green Mountain Boxwoods* would be added. This will provide some structure and year round color at the entrances. The plantings selected will keep it simple, provide color all year long and additions can be made easily. Ms. Potts said that Warwick is very pleased with how their property looks and they are grateful that Ms. Potts approached them about landscape improvement grants that are available. The total amount is \$5,409.75 with the City's 50% portion being \$2,705.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Schuetz and seconded by Ms. Kane to recommend approval of a landscape plan created by Evergreen Landscape and Associates Design for implementation at Warwick Publishing.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: None; Abstain: Potts

Motion Carried.

C. Corridor Improvement Grant 1625 E. Main Street (Colonial Café)

Mr. O'Rourke passed out landscape plans for this location to all members. Ms. Potts asked what the design fee was for the last project and Mr. O'Rourke said it was \$300. Ms. Potts said that this is two-fold plan. One of the meeting materials displays plans with regards to re-doing the walkway. Mr. Anderson would like to remove the 24 x 24 inch irregular squares (steppers) and pour concrete and that would become the walkway to the building which will also be wheel chair accessible.

Ms. Potts drew everyone's attention to the edging of boulders that are in place as you walk into the entrance on this property. There will be a couple of additional boulders added on either side of the sidewalk once the concrete is poured. The proposal also includes Tytar fabric and wash gravel. That is for placement along the building so when the rainwater comes down it goes into the ground.

Ms. Potts said the plantings will include *Lilacs*, *Spirea*, *Yews*, *Hydrangeas*, and a fragrant *Viburnum*, *Gro-low Sumac* and some small grasses. On either side of the walkway, *Lilyturf* will be added. Some of the *Daylilies* existing on the property will be regrouped with *Spirea* and *Rudbeckia* and added into the flower bed for color. Ms. Potts stated that the walkway will be added and the plantings will follow in the spring. Mr. O'Rourke said that with regards to the budget, it would be best to table this for now and approve this grant at a later date – in spring 2017. At that time, they will know what the final revised figure for the Lundeen's project will be. Ms. Potts said the total cost for this improvement at Colonial would be \$7,700. If there is not enough money left in this year's budget, they can still approve this in the spring and utilize funding from the next fiscal year.

A motion was made by Ms. Dechene and seconded by Vice Chair Schuetz to table approval of a Corridor Improvement Grant for Colonial Café until an application is received.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: None; Abstain: Potts

Motion Carried.

5. Additional Business from Corridor Commission Members, Public or Staff

Ms. Kane took photographs of flowers in pots that are located on 7th Avenue and Route 38 in Geneva. Mr. O'Rourke said the pots in front of the Shell Gas Station on Main Street, the City paid for through the grant that they were awarded. Some building owners in the downtown areas have started putting pots of plants out on their own. Ms. Kane said she will find out who covers the cost involved for the display of those plants in Geneva. Mr. O'Rourke said the thought would be to find somebody like the Eagle Scouts or a volunteer group that would be willing to come out and install it.

Ms. Kane asked what the intentions are regarding the plantings that were going to be implemented along the west side of The Finery Restaurant. Mr. O'Rourke said they did get reimbursed for that but they found that area requires much more preparation before anything can be planted there.

Ms. Kane stated that she thinks the landscape at Thompson Middle School continues to look great – and everyone agreed. She suggested, as a Commission, sending a note acknowledging how nice it looks and for providing such terrific care. Mr. O'Rourke said he would find out who is responsible for maintaining that landscape.

Chair English thought these were all good ideas and something they can work on during the fall and winter months.

Ms. Potts asked about the Curbie Awards that used to be awarded each year to the best improved landscape. Mr. O'Rourke said that has not been put into the budget since their overall budget was reduced. Chair English stated that he would rather spend the money on the grants instead of giving the award.

6. Announcements

There were none.

7. Upcoming Meeting Dates

A. October 5, 2016

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Pietryla and seconded by Vice Chair Schuetz to adjourn the meeting.

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