

CONSERVANCY & SCENIC CORRIDOR COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM
November 4, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Members present: Kelley Smith Chairman, Jeanette Burger, Maggie McCCasey and Rob Seitz.

Members absent; Sharon DalCompo

Also present: Jim Hogue, Village Planner

VISITOR BUSINESS;

There was no visitor business.

MEETING MINUTES – October 7, 2020

Minor Typographical errors were noted in the draft minutes. Commissioner Burger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Seitz to accept the October 7, 2020 Draft Meeting minutes as revised. On a voice vote all aye.

OLD APPLICATIONS: NONE

NEW APPLICATIONS: NONE

OTHER BUSINESS;

a.) Route 22 Landscape Plan –Review & Comment

Village Trustee O’Conner was present at the October meeting and asked if the CSCC could review the proposed landscape plans for the Route 22 widening. Specifically, she asked if CSCC would review the plantings and make suggestions, particularly as it relates to any proposed native plantings. The goal of this review is to forward information to IDOT for consideration in the Route 22 landscape plans. If acceptable to IDOT, this plant species mix could serve as model for future landscape planting along roadways. This “big picture” goal is to provide a uniform look to roadway plantings village wide.

Commissioner Burger had submitted comments for discussion by the entire CSCC. The CSCC asked staff to formalize the comments submitted by Commissioner Burger and bring them back for final consideration by the CSCC. The CSCC also noted that the Route 22 landscape plans appear “crowded” with quite a bit of plant material. There was a concern that overplanting would lead to die off of some of the plant material which would then need to be removed. This removal could potentially impact other “successful” species in the landscape mix.

It was suggested that the Route 22 plans also be submitted to the Village Arborist and those comments be incorporated into the CSCC comments as well.

Once finalized, these findings will be presented to the Village Board for further consideration.

b.) Discussion of natural plantings on landscape islands (Rt. 22; Rt. 83 & O.M.R entering the CBD).

Planner Hogue reiterated this was not a high priority of the Board and the direction from the Board was to explore the possibilities of natural plantings in medians on a preliminary basis with emphasis on;

- 1) Providing preliminary suggestions for natural plantings in landscape islands;
- 2). Fiscal Impacts\Financial Costs associated with these improvements;
- 3). The suggested plant list for natural plantings in medians.

He noted the CSCC previously discussed;

- 1). Determining the size of the medians (surface area & depth of planning “beds”) and cross sections, if available, of the median construction.
- 2) Which medians would be a priority (OMR & RT 83 to Aptakistic to start).
- 3) Acceptable native plant species for medians.
- 4) Additional native trees & shrubs for possible consideration.

He also suggested a policy paper or design guidelines for such improvements as a desirable outcome of this exercise as this was not a high priority of the board and funding for installation and maintenance would be issues with such a proposal.

Commissioner Seitz noted he had done a drive by of the areas in question and found the landscape medians to be narrow with regard to their construction and the condition of the median plantings to be “scrawny”.

Commissioner McCCasey noted that there were also concerns with traffic and visibility; “less is more” when it comes to this type of landscaping.

The Commission agreed that plantings should be low maintenance with a high tolerance for the harsh conditions associated with the median locations.

Commissioner Burger noted that typically native plantings initially had high maintenance requirements at the start. Usually three (3) years of initial maintenance (watering, weeding, etc.) was required to establish such plantings.

The CSCC then discussed the possibility of other materials such as paver blocks or other non-native species, such as the continued used of turf grass, as potential outcomes for the treatment of the medians.

The use of “blocks” or “beds” of native plantings within the existing turf grass could serve to break up the monotony of the medians making them more attractive.

Discussion of potential plant species included varieties of bergamot, golden rod, asters and beardstongue as candidates for median plantings. It was thought that these species could be successfully established in medians and provide an attractive flowering plant mix for the spring, summer and fall seasons.

It was noted that there was little mention of native grass species (in the materials reviewed) which could potentially serve as median plantings. However, it was thought that a more formal look which the flowering species could provide, was more desirable than the “prairie” look that the natural grasses would provide in the medians.

Once plant species are determined, costs for acquisition of materials, installation, and maintenance (initial and long term) could be determined. Environmental variables, such as excessive moisture or drought could have a substantial influence on the maintenance of these plantings. It was thought a small “test plot” in one of the medians would be an economical alternative in helping to determine the feasibility of “large scale” native plantings in the medians.

The CSCC thought it best to visit the sites of the medians and get a better idea of the conditions in and around the area. A site visit was scheduled for Monday November 9th @ 4:00 PM commencing at the Archer Parking Lot.

c). Updated Plant Species List

Commissioner Burger indicated that she continues to work on determining which species are readily available to make the plant list smaller and more practical for those using it. She continues to work to find commercial vendors which have the “desired species” readily available to the public.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING; Commissioner Burger moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Seitz. On a voice vote, all aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:19 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Hogue

James M. Hogue, Village Planner