

**CHESHIRE TOWN BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2015 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOM 207 / 209**

Committee Members Present:

Chairman William Bonaminio, Pat Archibald, William Meyerjack, Jane Presnick-Lyon, and Mike O'Donnell - Park & Recreation Commission Representative

Committee Members Absent:

Pauline Cacace, Susan Dillman, Jo-Ann Vitarelli and Lynn Voelker

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; Deborah Rutter, Deputy Director of Cheshire Public Library (arrived at 8:00 a.m.)

Others Present:

David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bonaminio called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present for this meeting.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 11, 2015 Special Meeting

MOTION by William Meyerjack that the Town Beautification Committee approves the minutes from the March 11, 2015 Special Meeting with the following correction: Page 5 item E the correct tree name is London Plane, not London Pine. **SECONDED** by Jane Presnick-Lyon.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Meyerjack, O'Donnell, and Presnick-Lyon
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sitko stated that there had been some talk of holding a future Town Beautification Committee meeting at the new CT Florist Association facility on East Johnson Avenue and asked if he should try to plan for this. Committee members agreed that it would be a good idea to hold a future meeting there.

Ms. Dillman had emailed Mr. Sitko regarding the parklet on the corner of Maple Avenue and Highland Avenue and suggested that the rhododendrons should be moved to another location and perhaps winterberry plants could be planted in the parklet instead.

VII. BUSINESS

A. Chamber of Commerce Expo – March 28

Chairman Bonaminio commented that he thought the Expo was a great success, the potting station at the Committee's booth is always a hit and the event was very well attended.

Mr. O'Donnell asked how members thought it compared to last year? Mr. Meyerjack replied that he spoke with Sheldon Dill, Chamber of Commerce Director, who thought it was the best show they have ever had. He is hoping to get attendance counts later this week.

Mr. Sitko stated that he received a few suggestions such as hand wipes and stools for the kids at the planting station.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested that the Town Beautification Committee start talking now about how, if at all, they would like to proceed for next year's Expo.

Mr. Sitko noted that it worked well for the event to have the MADD walk the same morning at Cheshire High School.

Chairman Bonaminio would like to have a letter sent to Cheshire Nursery to thank them for their participation and donations to the Expo.

B. Adopt-A-Spot Program

Mr. Sitko stated that all of last year's Town Beautification Committee's Adopt-A-Spot program participants have agreed to participate again this year.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested adding plantings around the Public Safety sign on Academy Road instead of around the current Cheshire Park sign because the sign at the Park is very low and will be difficult to plant around.

C. Planters

Ms. Archibald reported that the Cana lilies are starting to grow at the nursery. It will probably be another 3 weeks before the pansies can go into the planters. She noted that the greens are turning brown and it was agreed that they should be removed and the planters will be left with just dirt for a couple of weeks. Ms. Archibald stated that she is planning for a mix in the West Main Street planters of grasses, Cana lilies and begonias. Mr. Sitko noted that the price for watering the planters this year will be the same as last year.

D. Street trees

Mr. Sitko will meet with Chairman Bonaminio, Bob Ceccolini, Director of Parks & Recreation, and Councilman Schrumm next week to work on finalizing the plans for planting London Plane trees between the Allstate Insurance building south on Route 10 to the baseball fields in Bartlem Park. Once a final count of trees is determined, Mr. Sitko will work on gathering pricing so that this project can get started, noting that it will most likely be planted in phases.

E. Arbor Day Plantings at Schools

Mr. Sitko stated that Chapman School and Highland School have already committed to doing a planting on Arbor Day, April 24th. Norton School has said they would like to participate but it will likely be on another day. A copy of the letter to Doolittle School was included in this meeting's packet inviting them to participate in the Arbor Day planting program.

F. Trees to be Appreciated

A listing of the Trees in Cheshire that have been appreciated since 2005 by the Town Beautification Committee was included in this meeting's packet for members to review. The Trees to be Appreciated Committee will be meeting soon to decide on the 2015 trees.

G. Cheshire Public Library

Ms. Rutter, Deputy Director of the Cheshire Public Library, was present to speak to the Town Beautification Committee about a new garden plan for the front of the Library. Ms. Rutter explained that the plan was created by Anupa Simpatico, who is a member of the Cheshire Garden Club. The Cheshire Garden Club is celebrating its 100th year and would like to do a major civic project. Ms. Simpatico's design was created to provide varying interest in all four seasons; the new plantings are designed to be low maintenance that promote and support a healthy environment.

The Cheshire Garden Club will fund part of this project, \$500, along with money collected by the Friends of the Cheshire Library approximately \$1200-1300 in memory of a former member, Margaret Anderson. Ms. Rutter stated that she will be sending out letters to local nurseries to inquire about possible donations of trees or shrubs for the project. If the Town Beautification Committee has funds available, Ms. Rutter is looking for a \$600 donation or whatever the Committee feels is appropriate / available.

Ms. Rutter noted that this new garden plan will mean more maintenance and weeding initially and she plans to seek volunteers to help with this. She has talked with Bob Ceccolini of the Parks and Recreation Department, who thinks the plan is fine.

Chairman Bonaminio commented that there are a lot of perennials, not much for shrubs or evergreens in this new garden proposal. He asked if the plan means that a lot of the plantings that are already there will be taken out? Ms. Rutter replied that the broad leaf evergreens will be removed and used elsewhere in Town. The Junipers cannot be re-used but the azaleas and rhododendrons will also be moved somewhere else in Cheshire.

Chairman Bonaminio stated that his personal opinion is this is not going to look like what is there now and he thinks this proposed garden is a big mistake. There are no foundation plantings; there are almost all perennials and nothing shrubby. Chairman Bonaminio would suggest adding to what is already planted there, not remove all the foundation plants.

Ms. Rutter explained that the goal of this project is to create a flower garden, instead of foundation planting. She stated that she could ask to incorporate some of the foundation plantings with the new plan.

Ms. Rutter agreed that it is a different vision than what you are used to seeing. Chairman Bonaminio replied that it is nothing what he would do.

Ms. Presnick-Lyon stated that it really seems like Ms. Simpatico and Ms. Rutter have done their homework and are very knowledgeable about the plantings. She asked if there is going to be access for people to go out in the garden and read? Ms. Rutter replied yes. Ms. Presnick-Lyon commented that she thinks this vision of a garden is exactly what the Town Beautification Committee should be supporting because everyone in the Community can use it. Ms. Presnick-Lyon suggested the use of rain barrels, if an option.

Ms. Archibald commented that she knows Ms. Simpatico and has worked with her before through the Suburban Garden Club and agrees she knows her stuff. Ms. Archibald agrees that this is a very different plan. She asked is a bench could be put out in the garden and Ms. Rutter replied yes, maybe a small wooden bench perhaps with some flat stones for a walkway. Mr. O'Donnell suggested consulting with Mr. Ceccolini, who has done extensive research on benches, which have been installed on the Linear Trail in Cheshire.

Ms. Archibald continued to say that this is a very different concept; the key to the garden will be weeding and watering and will be a high maintenance garden.

Mr. O'Donnell commented that this proposed garden will take a lot of work and is very ambitious to get all the volunteers that will be needed to put the time in for this garden. This is a beautiful plan but a lot of maintenance will be needed.

Ms. Archibald and Ms. Presnick-Lyon both stated that they feel the Committee should support the Town. They asked how much is needed to fully fund this proposed garden and Ms. Rutter replied \$630, before any donations from the local nurseries. Ms. Rutter stated that she would also like to see labels for the different types of plants in the garden. She added that whatever the Town Beautification Committee can contribute would be appreciated and she is still planning to go to the local nurseries for planting assistance. The total estimated project cost is \$2,300.

MOTION by Jane Presnick-Lyon that the Town Beautification Committee supports the proposed garden project for the front of the Cheshire Public Library and would like to contribute \$630 toward this project. **SECONDED** by Pat Archibald.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Meyerjack, O'Donnell and Presnick-Lyon
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

H. Town Hall Lobby

Ms. Archibald stated that she met with Ms. Dillman and Mr. Sitko regarding re-designing / decorating the Town Hall Lobby to promote that Cheshire is the Bedding Capital of Connecticut.

I. Liaison Reports

Mr. O'Donnell reported that the Town Parks are still pretty much closed until more of the snow melts in Cheshire and Spring maintenance can be done.

Councilman Schrumm stated that the Town Council is working on the Operating Budget, noting that it is going to be another tight year.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mike O'Donnell to adjourned the April 1st Regular Meeting of the Town Beautification Committee at 8:51 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Jane Presnick-Lyon.

VOTE: In Favor – Archibald, Bonaminio, Meyerjack, O'Donnell and Presnick-Lyon
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Substitute Recording Secretary