

City of Marco Island Florida

*51 Bald Eagle Drive
Marco Island, Florida
cityofmarcoisland.com*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

3:00 PM

Community Room

Beautification Advisory Committee

Chair: Shelli Connelly

Vice-Chair: TBD

*Members: Michael Cory, Marv Needles,
Dustin Nesmith, Linda Scherzinger*

City Staff: Justin Martin, Jim Kornas, Tara Kosieracki

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chair Shelli Connelly called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

(2) ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Member Cory, Member Needles, Member Scherzinger and Chair Connelly

Absent: 1 - Member Nesmith

Also Present

*Ms. Deb Henry, Marco Island City Councilor
Ms. Bonita Schwan, Marco Island City Councilor*

*City Staff
Mr. Justin Martin, City of Marco Island Public Works Director & Committee Staff Liaison
Ms. Zurima Luff, City of Marco Island Storm Water Engineer
Mr. Martin Luna, City of Marco Island Audio/Visual Technician
Mr. Jim Kornas, City of Marco Island Recording Specialist*

(3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Chair Connelly

(4) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Member Cory, seconded by Member Needles, that the Agenda be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE CONSENT:

Yes: 4 - Member Cory, Member Needles, Member Scherzinger and Chair Connelly

(5) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

[ID 24-3922](#) Beautification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2024

MOTION by Member Scherzinger, seconded by Member Needles, that the Beautification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2024, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE CONSENT:

Yes: 4 - Member Cory, Member Needles, Member Scherzinger and Chair Connelly

(6) OLD BUSINESS

A. [ID 24-4027](#) 2025 Marco Nature Night Date & Plan (D. Nesmith)

Committee Recording Specialist Jim Kornas conveyed Member Dustin Nesmith's late-breaking communication indicating his inability to attend the meeting and provide insight on his plans to implement the February, 2025 Marco Nature Night Event.

Chair Shelli Connelly briefly reviewed the overall concept and typical "run of show" for the Committee's recent annual Marco Nature Night events, and she solicited a Committee volunteer to take over leadership of the 2025 event's planning and execution responsibilities.

Committee Member Marv Needles volunteered to assume the responsibility of coordinating the execution of the Committee's 2025 Marco Nature Night Event. Committee Member Michael Cory volunteered to assist Member Needles.

To assist and support Member Needles in this endeavor, Chair Connelly:

- 1) identified dates of March 5 & March 19 as potential alternative dates for the Event to accommodate the availability of key speakers and exhibitors;
- 2) highlighted the importance of having representation from Collier County's Pollution Control Section at the Event;
- 3) volunteered to reach out to the Event's recent past presenters and exhibitors to determine which potential dates might accommodate their availability, and;
- 4) committed to personally assist in the Event set-up on the night of the Event

Chair Connelly also requested that Recording Specialist Jim Kornas share the information that he received from former Committee Member Sharon Watts regarding the 2024 Marco Nature Night Event with Member Needles and all of the members of the Committee.

B. [ID 24-4029](#) 2025 Marco In Bloom Contest Plan Review (L.Scherzinger/M.Cory)

Committee Member Linda Scherzinger shared an in-depth overview of the 2024 Marco In Bloom Contest structure and detail, and she conveyed her appreciation to former Beautification Advisory Committee Member Julie McDonald for the excellent organization, record-keeping, and executional insights that Ms. McDonald provided her.

The Committee reviewed the Contest's property categories, the elements of last year's marketing plan, property judging logistics, the timeline for receiving, reviewing, and announcing winning properties at the Marco Island City Council, and the appearance of the yard sign awards. The following summarizes the key elements of the Committee's direction on this program for 2025:

- 1) the property categories for the Contest will remain unchanged for 2025;
- 2) the Committee will, again as in 2024, subdivide the Island into discreet areas for the Committee members to solicit property nominations;
- 3) the Committee's judging process will again consist of: a) each Committee member driving to each Contest property separately but arriving at the same time for property judging; b) each Committee member judging and scoring each property on her/his scoresheet individually, and; c) inviting a Master Gardener to accompany the Committee on the property visits to provide insight on the "Florida-friendliness" of the property's plantings, and;
- 4) the number of awarded properties per Contest category will remain the same as in 2024, assuming that a sufficient number of submissions are received in each category

Additionally, the Committee requested that the Marco Island City Staff support the promotion of the 2025 Marco In Bloom Contest by:

- 1) providing for the Committee to announce the Contest at the February 3, 2025 Marco Island City Council Meeting, with a follow-up announcement at the March 3, 2025 Marco Island City Council Meeting;
- 2) adding an informational QR code to the Contest application;

3) supporting an online submission process on the City's website for property nominations as was successfully implemented for the 2024 Marco In Bloom Contest, and;

4) placing informational/awareness-building public postings of the Contest on the City's social media sites

Committee Member Linda Scherzinger, as the Committee leader for the 2025 Marco In Bloom Contest, requested that the Committee target the announcement of winners and the presentation of yard signs for the April 7, 2025 City Council Meeting. The Committee understands that it will be required to limit its time for the presentation of Contest Awards at the City Council Meeting.

Public Works Director Justin Martin agreed to investigate and confirm whether City Audio/Visual support can be available to support the re-scheduling of the Committee's April meeting from April 9th (as currently scheduled) to April 2nd.

C. [ID 24-4030](#) Review/Discussion of Out-of-Compliance Landscaping Conditions (M. Needles)

Committee Member Marv Needles briefly introduced his discussion on this topic by: 1) reviewing the definition of "beautification"; 2) quoting from the Florida State Constitution on its policy regarding natural resources and "scenic beauty", and; 3) referencing City of Marco Island Code of Ordinances outlining the City's intent to "... eliminate non-conformities that distract from the City's character ...".

With this as a backdrop, Committee Member Needles reviewed photos of various locations and conditions on the Island where, he believes, non-conformity to the City's Code is detracting from the "beauty" of the Island. He requested that a representative from the City's Code Compliance Department be invited to review and address that department's approach to these conditions with the members of the Beautification Advisory Committee.

Public Works Director Justin Martin committed to inviting a representative of the City's Code Compliance Department to attend and address the February 5, 2025 meeting of the Beautification Advisory Committee.

D. [ID 24-4031](#) Historical Markers - Proposed Maintenance Checklist for Volunteer Organizations and Individuals (S. Connelly)

Committee Chair Shelli Connelly advised the Committee that the landscaping restoration of the City's Historical Markers was being completed on January 9th, and that Public Works Director Justin Martin had agreed to have the City's water truck conduct regular watering of all Historical Marker locations on a schedule to ensure that the plantings become well-established.

Chair Connelly also advised the Committee that the Rotary Club of Marco Island Sunrise would not be able to assist in the on-going landscape maintenance of the Historical Markers as previously reported at the Committee's October 2nd and November 13th meetings, and she committed to completing the annual polishing of the brass plates of each marker (and taking updated photos) as recommended by Mr. Cliff Ullmann of AGG Restoration Specialists. [Editorial Note: see the Minutes for Agenda Item 6B ID 24-3987 (Historical Markers - Proposed Maintenance Checklist for Volunteer Organizations and Individuals) from the Committee's December 4, 2024 meeting]

Chair Connelly noted that two Historical Markers had been relocated from their original locations, and she requested that City Public Works Director Justin Martin consider identifying and recording the exact GPS location of each Historical Marker, and including that information on the City's website.

She also proposed that a soon-to-be-appointed member of the Committee be asked to reach out to the Marco Island Historical Society to collaborate on the creation of a flyer/brochure for members of the public who might wish to explore the significant sites of Marco Island's rich history. [Editorial Note: City

Councilor Bonita Schwan, during her remarks to the Committee under Agenda Item 9 (City Council Communication) noted that the Marco Island Chamber of Commerce 2024 Annual Publication and Destination Guide carries a map and description of the Island's Historical Markers on pages 80 - 81]

E. [ID 24-4039](#) Mackle Park Tree Donation Implementation Update (S. Connelly)

Public Works Director Justin Martin advised the Committee that no new report on the status of the planting of trees around the water body at Mackle Park had been provided by the City's Growth Management/Community Affairs Department. He committed to asking that Department to provide an update to the Committee on or before its next meeting.

Committee Chair Shelli Connelly briefly outlined the timeline of events between the commitment of the donors to fund the tree plantings and the status of the project to date as she had at the Committee's December 4, 2024 meeting, as she engaged in the Committee in a discussion of potential next steps.

Chair Connelly requested that this topic return for review and discussion at the Committee's February 5, 2025 meeting.

(7) NEW BUSINESS

A. [ID 24-4032](#) 2025 Tree Fund - Proposed S. Heathwood Planting & Alternative Locations (S. Connelly, L. Scherzinger, D. Nesmith)

Public Works Director Justin Martin briefly reviewed the steps that he shared with the Committee at its December 4, 2024 meeting to facilitate the locating and planting of individual trees along South Heathwood Drive, noting that a Right-of-Way Permit application for each identified tree planting location must be initiated by an individual (person) so that the City's Water & Sewer and Public Works Department personnel can be scheduled to accompany that individual's selected landscape contractor in assessing the ability to plant each tree in its desired location without damage to nearby underground utilities.

At the Committee's request, Mr. Martin agreed to solicit a proposal from the City's landscaping contractor (Affordable Landscape & Design, Inc.) and, if consistent with the Committee's preliminary per tree budget estimate, will issue a Purchase Order for the work, and proceed with accepting this landscaping contractor's Right-of-Way Permit applications for the proposed tree planting locations.

Additionally, Public Works Director Martin agreed to query the City's Water & Sewer Department on water main breaks that were recorded and attributable to the planting of new trees on the Island in the recent past.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE COMMITTEE'S SOUTH HEATHWOOD AVENUE TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE:

Committee Member Linda Scherzinger, as charged by the Committee at its December 4, 2025 meeting, shared a visual presentation and discussion of three (3) proposed alternative areas/locations for the Committee's consideration in the event that the Committee's investigation and plan for South Heathwood Avenue not meet the Committee's desired result. Those areas were:

- 1) Swallow Avenue by the M.I.C.A. & Public Beach Parking Lots;*
- 2) East Elkcam Circle Between Tallwood Street and 6th Avenue, & In Front of the Post Office & 5th/3rd Bank, and;*
- 3) Bald Eagle Drive South of Elkcam and North of Samoa Avenue*

Member Scherzinger also outlined seven (7) other potential areas/locations for future Tree City USA/Tree Fund projects.

Committee Chair Shelli Connelly communicated the interest of City Parks, Culture & Recreation Manager Samantha Malloy's in seeing more trees being planted in Calusa Park and in other areas on the grounds of Mackle Park. She also advised the Committee of that representatives from the Calusa Garden Club may be coming to the Committee's February meeting to request an allocation from the Committee's Tree Fund.

No members of the public came forward to offer comment.

MOTION by Member Needles, seconded by Chair Connelly, that, in the event that the Committee's South Heathwood Avenue tree planting plan not meet the Committee's desired expectations, or if funds remain in the Committee's 2025 Tree Fund budget after the execution of the South Heathwood Avenue planting effort, that the next alternative area/location for the application of the Committee's 2025 Tree Budget be directed toward the Swallow Avenue alternative location, be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE VOTE:

Yes: 4 - Member Cory, Member Needles, Member Scherzinger and Chair Connelly

(8) STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

- A. [ID 24-4040](#) South Heathwood Median at Winterberry Drive: Post Hurricane Season Repair Update (J. Martin)

At the onset of the Committee's discussion of Agenda Item 7A (2025 Tree Fund - Proposed S. Heathwood & Alternative Locations), Public Works Director Justin Martin advised the Committee of the City's successful replacement of the South Heathwood Avenue median's hurricane storm surge damaged plants.

- B. [ID 23-3274](#) Director Justin Martin's Report

In response to questions raised by members of the Committee, Public Works Director Justin Martin shared insights regarding: 1) attempts by the City to solicit State of Florida funding to improve the contour and minimize the runoff of irrigation water from the medians on Collier Boulevard; 2) the history of Marco Island's City Council in budgeting to replace trees and other vegetation in the City's medians following severe weather events, and; 3) FEMA not providing reimbursement to municipalities for storm-related landscape damage and restoration.

(9) CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

- [ID 23-3296](#) "City Council Communication" Agenda Topic

Councilor Bonita Schwan shared her intention to propose that the Marco Island City Council endorse and receive twice-annual presentations/reports from the Beautification Advisory Committee and other City Committees during calendar year 2025.

Councilor Schwan also:

- 1) committed to approach City Manager Mike McNees on the Committee's concerns related to the delays in acting on a privately-funded donation to plant 100 trees around the retention basin/lake at Mackle Park;*
- 2) conveyed her support for a re-visiting of the City's Ordinances on the display of political signs in public rights-of-way, and;*

3) noted the locations of the City's Historical Markers on pages 80 - 81 of the Marco Island Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Annual Publication and Destination Guide.

(10) PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward to offer comment at this meeting.

(11) NEXT MEETING: CONFIRMATION & ATTENDANCE

[ID 23-3293](#) Next Meeting: Confirmation & Attendance

Chair Connelly confirmed that a quorum can likely be seated to conduct business at its next scheduled meeting on February 5, 2025.

(12) PROPOSED AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

[ID 24-3992](#) 2025 Committee "Open Items" for Future Follow-Up (All)

The Committee reviewed the status of its initiatives and its Future Agenda Items in identifying the following topics for discussion and action at its February 5, 2025 meeting:

1. Election of Committee Chair & Vice-Chair (All)
2. Review of the Committee's Charter and 2025 Work Plan (All)
3. Collaboration with City's Fleet & Facilities Department & the Beach & Coastal Advisory Committee on the Beach Access Pathways Enhancement Project (Fleet & Facilities Department)
4. Cul-de-Sac Irrigation & Autoflusher Utilization Information for Neighborhoods (M. Needles)

(13) OTHER COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

No other Committee Communications were shared during this portion of the meeting.

(14) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 4:57 P.M.

Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist