

# City of Marco Island Florida

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



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

**Wednesday, June 4, 2025**

**3:00 PM**

**Community Room**

## **Beautification Advisory Committee**

*Chair: Marv Needles*

*Vice-Chair: Linda Scherzinger*

*Members: Michael Cory, Victoria Myers,  
Julie Rogers, Ann Sepe, Ryan Sullivan*

*City Staff: Justin Martin, Jim Kornas, Tara Kosieracki*

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

*Chair Needles called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.*

**(2) ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 6 - Member Cory, Member Myers, Member Rogers, Vice-Chair Scherzinger, Member Sullivan and Chair Needles

**Absent:** 1 - Member Sepe

***Also Present***

*City Councilor Rene Champagne*

*City Councilor Deb Henry*

***CITY STAFF:***

*Justin Martin, Public Works Director*

*Bart Bradshaw, Water & Sewer Department Collections & Distribution Manager*

*Martin Luna, Audio/Visual Technician*

*Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist*

***Motion to Allow for Remote Participation by Member Victoria Myers***

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Scherzinger, seconded by Member Sullivan, to allow Member Myers to participate in, and vote on, all matters coming before the Committee at this meeting. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 5 - Member Cory, Member Rogers, Vice-Chair Scherzinger, Member Sullivan and Chair Needles

**(3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Led by Chair Needles.*

**(4) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Scherzinger, seconded by Member Cory, that the Agenda be Approved. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE CONSENT.**

**Yes:** 6 - Member Cory, Member Myers, Member Rogers, Vice-Chair Scherzinger, Member Sullivan and Chair Needles

**(5) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

[ID 25-4467](#) Beautification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025

**Attachments:** [Beautification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025](#)

*Vice-Chair Scherzinger requested that Minutes for Agenda Item 7B (Debrief of 2025 Marco In Bloom Contest Execution & Plan for Next Year) be corrected to reflect a more general date range later this year when the Committee will identify its Committee leader for the 2026 Marco In Bloom Contest.*

*[Editorial Note: this was corrected prior to the publishing of the Committee's May 7, 2025 Minutes]*

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Scherzinger, seconded by Member Rogers, that the Beautification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025 be Approved as Amended. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE CONSENT.**

**Yes:** 6 - Member Cory, Member Myers, Member Rogers, Vice-Chair Scherzinger, Member Sullivan and Chair Needles

## **(6) OLD BUSINESS**

### **6A [ID 25-4468](#) Chair Needles' Committee Update (M. Needles)**

*Chair Needles briefly updated the Committee on the status of his outreach to commercial property owners/investors along the Committee's planned East Elkcarn Circle tree-planting area to solicit donations for new tree plantings during the 2026 budget year.*

### **6B [ID 25-4469](#) Newspaper Article and Website for Private Tree Donations (J. Rogers)**

*Committee Member Julie Rogers briefly outlined a proposal to generate public awareness and interest in contributing toward the planting of trees in public rights-of-way (e.g. swales) and other public areas (e.g. City parks). Envisioning a three-step system for: 1) generating awareness; 2) directing interested donors to a dedicated website, and; 3) having interested donors complete an online donation form with their donation, Ms. Rogers proposed a six-month (November through March) promotional campaign primarily consisting of paid ads in the Island's local print newspapers.*

*The Committee, in discussing Member Rogers' proposal, offered alternative avenues for generating awareness inexpensively which included paid and unpaid social media postings on Facebook and NextDoor, informational articles for the Marco Eagle and the Coastal Breeze newspapers, Letters to the Editor submissions to those same publications, and periodic "Citizen Comments" appearances before the Marco Island City Council.*

*The Committee's discussion evolved into a brief review of several different approaches for a privately-funded tree planting program on Marco Island.*

*One proposed approach would encourage individual homeowners to undertake the expense of procuring, planting, and establishing a tree in their own swale(s). Relying on Committee-supplied information and encouragement, this approach would result in each homeowner undertaking the effort and expense of obtaining a right-of-way (swale) permit for his/her individual tree planting project. Each homeowner could select his/her own landscape contractor.*

*A second proposed approach would have the Committee attempt to encourage a neighborhood of homeowners to agree to participate in and fund a neighborhood-wide planting of trees in their swales using a Committee-coordinated listing of recommended trees and, perhaps, the identification of swale locations deemed by City Staff to be largely free of underground and overhead infrastructure impediments. Under this approach, only one (1) right-of-way (swale) permit fee would be required for the entire neighborhood. The neighborhood would have the freedom to select its own landscape contractor(s) for the entire neighborhood project.*

*A third proposed approach would have the Committee directly manage all elements of the tree-planting effort in individual (or neighborhood) swales on behalf of the property owner(s) once the property owner(s) have remitted their agreed-upon donation amount. Under this approach, the City's landscape contractor completes all aspects of the tree procurement, planting, and maintenance under direction by the Committee. The right-of-way (swale) permit fee for each property owner is waived.*

*Next Steps:*

*Committee Chair Marv Needles requested that Member Julie Rogers draft a "white paper" outlining her proposed approach, details, and timetable for implementing a private tree donation program for review at the Committee's July 9, 2025 meeting.*

*Committee Member Ryan Sullivan volunteered to draft a proposed newspaper article for announcing this program with the key proposed program details to be provided by Member Rogers.*

*Chair Needles volunteered to reach out to former Beautification Advisory Committee Chair David Leaser to schedule a time for him to address the Committee with his (Mr. Leaser's) insights and recommendations for implementing a citizen and business community funded donation program to plant trees on Marco Island.*

*Chair Needles also volunteered to contact representatives from the Naples Botanical Garden to invite them to address the Committee on trees (and their root systems) that might be best for planting in neighborhood swales.*

*Public Works Director Justin Martin volunteered to honor the donations and plant the desired trees for the 3 - 4 donors to the Ten Thousand Trees in Ten Years Pilot Program that had been identified by Member Julie Rogers.*

**6C**     [ID 25-4470](#)     Arbor Day Plaque and Stand Procurement Update (M. Cory)

*Committee Member Michael Cory reported that the plaque and stand to commemorate the Committee's 2025 Arbor Day tree planting had been ordered and should be available within 30 days. Member Cory committed to advise the Committee when the plaque and stand have been received.*

*Member Cory also noted that he has been watering the tree twice weekly and that it appears to be doing well.*

**6D**     [ID 25-4471](#)     Michael Collins Commemorative Tree Initiative Update (V. Myers)

*Committee Member Victoria Myers reported that: 1) the planting site for the Michael Collins Commemorative Tree at Veterans Community Park had been approved by the City's Community Affairs Office; 2) planting of an Orange Geiger tree is planned, and; 3) she had requested collaboration from Mr. Terry Kehoe of American Legion Post 404 in specifying the design and appearance standards for the commemorative plaque to honor Mr. Collins.*

*Photos of other commemorative plaques already on display in Veterans Community Park were reviewed with the Committee.*

*Member Myers noted that she was already in contact with the City's landscape contractor (Affordable Landscaping Service & Design, LLC) to procure an appropriate Geiger tree, and that the Committee will have an opportunity to review a photo of the proposed tree selection before approving its procurement.*

*As noted in the Minutes of the Committee's May 7, 2025 meeting (Agenda Item 7E), a ceremony to officially commemorate Astronaut Collins will be planned for and conducted in the winter/spring of 2026 to coincide with his family's seasonal presence on Marco Island.*

## **(7) NEW BUSINESS**

**7A**     [ID 25-4472](#)     Review of "Most UnWanted" Invasive Species Poster Concept (R. Sullivan)

**Attachments:**     [Most UnWanted Invasive Flora Poster - Broward County - May, 2025](#)

*Committee Member Ryan Sullivan shared a "Marco's Most UnWanted" proof-of-concept poster with the*

Committee that identified and explained the reasons why the twelve (12) named trees depicted are not desired on Marco Island. He proposed creating similar "Most UnWanted" posters for: 1) undesired shrubs & vines and; 2) undesired grasses & ground covers, and he will forward a listing of all proposed plants to be included in his "Most UnWanted" collection of posters for Committee review prior to the Committee's July meeting.

The Committee provided positive feedback to Member Sullivan on his approach and execution, and it discussed its desire to:

- 1) encourage dissemination of this information to property owners and contractors who engage with the City's Building Services Department;
- 2) invite horticulturalist and former Beach & Coastal Resources Advisory Council Chair Lindsay Boehner to lead a presentation/discussion of noxious plants and invasive species at the Committee's 2026 Marco Nature Night Event, and;
- 3) draft proposed updates to Marco Island Ordinance 98-19 for City Staff and City Council approval

Public Works Director Justin Martin proposed that the Committee consult online resources available through Collier County and the University of Florida which specifically address noxious plants and invasive species for southwest Florida in "marking up" proposed changes to Marco Island Ordinance 98-19. He also recommended that the Committee consult with the City's Environmental Planner on this effort.

Committee Member Ryan Sullivan volunteered to lead the Committee's effort in contacting the City's Environmental Planner and other outside resources in drafting an update to Ordinance 98-19 for the Committee's review.

### **Impromptu Committee Discussion: Cul-de-Sac Information for Neighborhoods**

Vice-Chair Linda Scherzinger reminded the Committee of existing information on the Committee's City of Marco Island webpage entitled "Cul-de-Sac Landscaping & Permitting Guide". She proposed that the Committee review this information for timeliness and accuracy at a future meeting of the Committee.

Chair Needles concurred with Vice-Chair Scherzinger's recommendation, and he reminded the Committee of his plan to augment this information with his estimated cul-de-sac development and annual maintenance costs which he shared with the Committee at its March 5, 2025 meeting (Agenda Item 6B).

This topic is reflected on the Committee's Future Agenda.

## **7B [ID 25-4141](#) Review of Committee's Charter & 2025 Goals/Workplan (All)**

**Attachments:** [Committee Charter - Resolution 23-31](#)  
[BAC Goals Workshop - R Blonna 091323](#)  
[2022 mission statement for the marco island bac 3-1-2022](#)

The Committee briefly discussed the Committee's Goals and Objectives last endorsed by previous members of the Beautification Advisory Committee on October 4, 2023 (Agenda Item 7b).

[Editorial Note: see the attachment "2022\_mission\_statement\_for\_the\_marco\_island\_bac\_3-1-2022" noted above]

Vice-Chair Linda Scherzinger, in noting the Committee's past engagement with the City's Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee on Committee-led trees planted in Mackle Park and Calusa Park, proposed that a representative member of each Committee be appointed and come together to:

1) collaborate in identifying City park locations where new trees are desired for the 2026 Fiscal Year (and beyond), and;

2) lead the engagement within their respective Committees to obtain full Committee commitment to the collaboratively-developed tree-planting plan.

Chair Needles, with the support of the Committee, endorsed the proposal offered by Vice-Chair Scherzinger and he volunteered to reach out to the Chair of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (Ms. Dolores Siegel) to propose that a Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee representative be identified.

Vice-Chair Scherzinger volunteered to lead this collaboration on behalf of the Beautification Advisory Committee.

## **(8) STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

### **8A      [ID 25-4473](#)      Committee Input on Replacement Trees Along Bald Eagle Drive (J. Martin)**

*Public Works Director Justin Martin reviewed the situation that resulted in Lee County Electric Cooperative (LCEC) recently removing trees along Bald Eagle Drive to conduct power pole replacements, and he clarified the responsibilities of the City and LCEC in trimming and maintaining trees that are under existing overhead power lines.*

*In response to questions raised by the Committee, Director Martin explained the application of LCEC's requested height restriction for trees planted directly under existing overhead power lines, and he addressed the execution of the Committee's approved 2025 Fiscal Year tree-planting plan for South Heathwood Drive (using Pink Tabebuia trees) and along Swallow Avenue (using Orange Geiger trees). He also sensitized the Committee on the safety aspects of non-LCEC tree trimming contractors risking electrocution if they trim trees that are too close to overhead power lines.*

*Public Works Director Martin committed to provide the Committee with an electronic copy of LCEC's tree-planting guidelines prior to the Committee's July meeting.*

*Chair Needles recommended that the Committee dedicate effort toward developing a matrix of priorities and trade-offs that affect the successful implementation of a well-canopied, tree-friendly Marco Island for future review with the Marco Island City Council.*

### **8B      [ID 25-4438](#)      Discussion with Water & Sewer General Manager Jeff Poteet (All)**

*Mr. Bart Bradshaw, Collections & Distribution Manager with the City of Marco Island Water & Sewer Department, provided the Committee with his insights and experience with tree root systems that invade the City's water lines, sewer pipes and individual meter boxes.*

*Mr. Bradshaw noted that cul-de-sacs are particularly dense areas for utility and other infrastructure components, and the fibrous roots which are characteristic of palm trees can significantly affect the time that it takes for the City to complete an infrastructure repair. Oftentimes, in rights-of-way, multiple layers of active and inactive cables make it difficult for the City's utility team to move or displace cables without incurring a great deal of cost and adversely affecting the service to customers who rely on those utilities.*

*Noting that significant damage also occurs when trees are uprooted and water lines are broken as a result, Mr. Bradshaw sensitized the Committee to the difficulty of maintaining system-wide water pressure when multiple trees are uprooted by hurricanes and other extreme weather events. He specifically cautioned the Committee to avoid South Heathwood Drive, Bald Eagle Drive, Winterberry Drive, and North*

and South Collier Boulevard where major water utility lines to and from the City's water treatment and distribution facilities are located.

The Committee discussed the practicality of pursuing a "tree-lined streets" strategy for the Island along with the potential need to narrow its recommendations to a limited number of tree species for certain target areas of the Island.

Vice-Chair Linda Scherzinger volunteered to investigate whether effective "root barrier" structures are available and reasonably cost-effective to deploy around new tree plantings in the vicinity of high-density underground infrastructure elements.

## 8C [ID 23-3274](#) Director Justin Martin's Report

Director Martin advised the Committee of his intention to advance a draft policy on the display of banners on City light poles for City Council review in the August timeframe. He requested that the Committee review, provide input to, and, potentially, endorse his draft at its July 9, 2025 meeting. Chair Needles requested that a draft of the policy be provided to the Committee prior to the issuance of the Committee's July Agenda.

Director Martin also advised the Committee that a transition in Staff Liaison responsibility for the Beautification Advisory Committee to Mr. Joe Parrilli, Manager of the City's Fleet & Facilities Department, will be undertaken during the upcoming summer months.

In response to a question raised earlier in the meeting during Agenda Item 8A regarding wider right-of-way streets as potential priorities for future Committee tree-planting initiatives, Director Martin advised the Committee that sections of Bald Eagle Drive are planned for widening to accommodate two (2) seven-foot bicycle lanes within the next several years.

He also noted that nighttime illumination from overhead street lamps is an important consideration to many Island residents when planting trees along main thoroughfares on the Island.

## (9) CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

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

Marco Island City Councilor Rene Champagne advised the Committee that former Beautification Advisory Committee members David Leaser and Fiona Winter reached out to him to request that the now-sunsetted Ten Thousand Trees in Ten Years Program concept be resurrected for City Council consideration and approval. Councilor Champagne asked that the Committee consider this request and develop a recommendation for the City Council's consideration.

[Editorial Note: please see the summary of Agenda Item 6B in these Minutes for an overview of potential, future Committee approaches to encourage and facilitate privately-funded tree planting activities on Marco Island]

Councilor Champagne also advised the Committee of a \$450,000.00 donation assignment by an unnamed donor specifically designated to fund the procurement and installation of shade trees and/or other shade instruments at Veterans Community Park. He invited the Committee to stay aware and engaged in the future development of this initiative.

## (10) PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward to address the Committee at this meeting.



**(11) NEXT MEETING: CONFIRMATION & ATTENDANCE**

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

**Attachments:** [BAC 2025 Meeting Schedule - with logo](#)

*Chair Needles confirmed that a quorum of seated members is expected for the Committee's July 9, 2025 meeting.*

**(12) FUTURE AGENDA REVIEW & AGENDA TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING**

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

**Attachments:** [Future Agenda - Beautification Advisory Committee – Portrait Orientation 060125](#)

*The Committee identified several Agenda items for the Committee's July 9th meeting.*

**(13) OTHER COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS**

*During Committee Member Michael Cory's report on his progress in procuring a plaque and stand to commemorate the Committee's 2025 Arbor Day planting, Member Ryan Sullivan noted that the tree supports for one of the recently-planted trees around the retention "lake" at Mackle Park were broken and that the tree was no longer fully upright. With the Committee's support, Member Sullivan volunteered to reach out to Marco Island Community Affairs Director Dan Smith to request that corrective action be deployed by the City Staff to repair and reinforce the support of this tree.*

**(14) ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business before the Committee, Chair Needles adjourned the meeting at 4:38 P.M.*

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*Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist*