

MURRAY CITY POWER

Shade Tree & Beautification Commission

Murray City, Utah

June 1, 2021

Minutes of the Murray City Power Shade Tree & Beautification Commission meeting held on June 1, 2021 at Murray City Power located at 153 West 4800 South, Murray, Utah.

Shade Tree & Beautification Commission

Darin Bird
Dr. Jan Evans
Geneal Nelson
Judith Payne (excused)
Connie Fong

Department Staff

Matt Erkelens, Forestry Supervisor
Bruce Holyoak, Park Superintendent

Dr. Evans called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. She was happy to welcome everyone in person as meetings were held via zoom last year due to Covid. She also mentioned how nice it was not to have masks on for the meeting. Dr. Evans excused Judith from the meeting, noted that Jim Hendrickson's presence is also missed, and welcomed Connie Fong, the newest member of the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission. Connie was invited to share a few things about herself.

Connie grew up in the Cottonwood area and drove down Vine Street on her way to Cottonwood High School. Little did she know that one day she would live on Vine Street. Her husband has 3 children in Arizona as well as some grandchildren, so they go back and forth a bit. She has a son. This is their second marriage. She graduated from the University of Utah. She had an apartment building in downtown Salt Lake and was interested when she heard there was a new apartment complex going up in Murray. Connie loves gardening and perennials. She is wanting to know more about trees. Her sister-in-law, Kim Fong, Director of Murray City Library, approached her to see if she would be interested in applying to be on the Shade Tree Commission. (Jim Hendrickson passed away and there was a vacancy.) Connie expressed an interest and looks forward to occupying her time with volunteering on the Commission.

Matt said that the Commission would be happy to fill some of her time and both he and Dr. Evans welcomed Connie to the board. Matt reported that Jim Hendrickson founded the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission in 1980 and later asked Dr. Evans to be on the board.

Fourth of July Parade

Matt reported that this year the parade will be different from years past. People will not be allowed to be on the trucks and candy will not be thrown.

Matt will get golf carts and needs to know a week in advance to see who is planning on being there. Darin said that he will be there.

(At this point in the meeting a citizen joined the meeting. She introduced herself as Cori Brown with Cori Brown Associates. She reported that loves trees and has just planted 40 plus trees in her yard. Matt said that she is helping the environment by doing so. Dr. Evans said that she would love to see, and Cori said that sometime in the future that would be ok but that she came today because she just wanted to help.)

Geneal wanted to know if Matt needed t-shirt sizes before the parade. Matt thought that they'd just used their Shade Tree Commission shirts. Geneal wondered about shirts for kids who were riding in the golf carts with them. Matt said that he would check into that and let them know but he didn't think we would be doing any shirts. Geneal wondered about maybe choosing a color so they would coordinate. Matt said that they would get a shirt for Connie.

Matt wondered what the Commission could do to make the parade more exciting for spectators now that candy can't be thrown. Dr. Evans said how disappointed the kids would be...they come with their bags. Darin asked if the Power Department trucks would be in the parade at all and Matt reported that they wouldn't be. Matt will follow behind in his truck in case there are any mechanical issues with the golf carts. It will definitely be a different year. Geneal asked if the golf carts would have roofs on them and Matt said they would. Matt said that it is supposed to start warming up as early as this week. Everyone said it was starting to get warm as they came into the meeting. In another month it will be really hot.

Connie wondered about putting a tree in the back of the golf cart. Matt has some flags and banners but wondered what else they could do to "stand out". Dr. Evans wondered about giving out a flag that said, "Tree City USA; Murray". Darin didn't think that anything could be given out. Matt thought that was the case and said that it was a "safety issue". Geneal wondered if something happened last time and Matt didn't know. Dr. Evans said it sounded like too much fun so "we can't have that". Matt asked the Commission to think about it and shoot him an email if they did come up with anything.

Connie wondered what the parade route was. Matt told her it went from the Fashion Place Mall, North on State to Vine then to the Murray Park entrance, through the park and ends at the Rec Center.

Cori Brown asked about doing a project where all the neighbors put in trees along the park strip. She mentioned that Brad Reynolds Construction put a lot of trees along Vine Street where new houses have been built. She said that 80% of the trees had died and wondered if people didn't know how to care for them.

Matt said they ran into that problem when they used to plant free trees and people wouldn't water them.

Cori Brown did say that her sister bought her old house and didn't like the leaves from the trees, but Cori Brown reminded everyone that the trees are what makes the neighborhoods. She said trees are what makes a beautiful street. Cori Brown again wondered if people just don't know how to properly care for trees.

Dr. Evans asked about having a booth at the Fun Days where the Commission could educate citizens about proper tree care and the importance of trees. There could be a sign on the truck to visit the Shade Tree and Beautification booth at the park.

Bruce reported that the City won't be doing any booths this year and that maybe it could be something to think about in the future. He said that with the food trucks they kind of quit doing other booths.

Dr. Evans asked if the food trucks had to sign up or if they just showed up. Bruce said that the City has an agreement with the Food Truck League, so they are assigned when to come. Dr. Evans asked if it was like Tuesday nights and Bruce said that it is similar.

Dr. Evans asked about having a booth during Power Days and Matt felt that could be an option.

Darin expressed his hope that next year's Arbor Day would be "more normal" and people could be educated then. Matt felt that next year the traditional Arbor Day celebration would be able to be held.

Darin asked Bruce about the new pavilions at Murray City Park. Bruce reported that all but pavilion #5 have been updated and that crews are still working on #5. (Pavilion #5 is the large one next to the Park's Department office and is the one where Power Days is usually held. It is large and will hold 400 people where the others hold about 250.)

Dr. Evans asked if the Arts group has weekend activities as they do in some communities like "Sunday in the Park". Bruce said that have a lunch concert every Tuesday at noon and a storytelling on Tuesday at 10:00 am. They also have a concert on Thursdays at pavilion #2. Dr. Evans asked about a Sunday evening activity like they do in small communities. Bruce said that they don't do anything on Sunday but do have a Tuesday night food truck. Dr. Evans indicated she hadn't been to the food trucks and asked if there was music there or activities in addition to the food trucks. Bruce said that it was just food trucks. Dr. Evans asked why she was trying to make Murray into a small town. 😊 Bruce said if she went, she would see it's not a small town and that the food trucks will be packed. Darin asked about how to know which food trucks will be there and Bruce said the list is posted on Facebook or the public can look on foodtruck.com to see where the food trucks will be. Dr. Evans thanked Bruce for being a "wealth of knowledge" and was appreciative that Bruce was able to answer all her questions.

Jim and Jean Hendrickson Beautification Awards

The nominations are due July 1st. The online nominations are on the Murray City website. Matt asked the Commission to start looking for yards. He reported that Barbara has advertised in the

Murray Journal and the Mayor's Newsletter. It will also be posted on Murray City Power's Facebook page.

Citizens can nominate themselves or a neighbor. Darin said that the Commission usually goes through their areas and looks for yards to nominate. Dr. Evans reminded everyone to look for single family, multi-family and businesses. Also, she reminded everyone to look for xeriscape landscaping. She said if a Commission member finds a yard in someone else's district, go ahead and nominate it. Commission members aren't limited to their own districts. After all the nominations are in, judging will be done.

In the past Dr. Evans has been responsible for Jim's district and now that Connie is on the board, she won't have to do that.

Matt will send out the nominations to everyone prior to meeting again and asked that everyone pick the top few in their areas.

Dr. Evans mentioned that so many have had extra time (because of the pandemic) that yards, including hers, are looking fabulous. She felt there would be lots of yards to choose from.

Darin mentioned that the judging will be done earlier this year than in the past which will be good with the drought we are in. He suggested it may be possible there could be watering restrictions so it's good to look at the yards while they are at their best.

Matt concurred that the photos will also look better with more plants and shrubs in bloom.

On July 13th is when the Commission will get together to drive the route and judge the yards. Darin suggested they meet at 9:00 am at the Power Department office (153 West 4800 South).

Darin explained that board members need to get their nominations to Matt and then Matt will compile a list of ALL nominations and send to board members PRIOR to July 13th. Board members will go on their own, look at the ones in their district and narrow it down to **2 or 3**. Then they will get together on July 13th and drive the areas and judge the yards. (The board found when they had a larger number of homes to see as a group, it was time consuming and some even got car sick.)

Connie asked if the homeowners would know that they are coming to judge. Matt and Darin explained that some homeowners nominate themselves so they will know someone is coming to check. Some people have nominated their neighbors and those neighbors might not know about it. None of them know when the judging will be done. Matt emphasized that board members won't need to knock on the door, just to drive by. Only front yards will be judged.

Darin reminded board members to look for xeriscape, multi-family (a duplex counts as multi-family) and businesses. He also stated that it's good to look for those homeowners that are caring for their own yards as opposed to those who have hired it done. In fact, when they go around to judge the board may see homeowners working in the yard before the heat of the day.

Dr. Evans said that professionals doing the work doesn't prohibit someone from winning, it's just a preference, when possible, to choose the homeowner's work.

If there is a yard that really stands out, it would receive the Mayor's award.

The board tries not to have the same yards win the awards consecutively. There are some yards that are beautiful year after year. In the category of multi-family winners are often the same from year to year as there aren't as many to choose from. (ie: Three Fountains or Lost Creek)

The July 1st deadline gives Matt about 2 weeks to get the list put together of the nominees and to get everything organized. Matt will also send out a list of past winners.

After the judging is done, board members will inform the winners and a sign will be put in the winning yards. The owners will then attend a Council Meeting on **September 7th at 6:30 pm** where the Council and Mayor will give them an award. Darin thanked Matt for doing such a great job at the Council meetings. There is a picture of the home on the big screen when the award is given, and each board member announces the winner of their district. The other awards are divided among the board members to announce. The Mayor will give the Mayor's award and shake the hands of the winners.

Darin said that it's a fun experience to hear the owner's experiences when they inform them they've won. Often there are tears and stories of what motivates them to care for their yards. Dr. Evans said one of the winners from last year has called her twice this year to tell her what she's been doing. Dr. Evans also said how much the winners love having the sign in their yard.

If it comes to a tie, the board will often choose a "diamond in the rough". In an area where not many homeowners are caring for their property, you might see someone who has taken extra care in their yards and that is taken into consideration as well. And then there are times when the award is given to a yard where all the yards on the street are beautiful. It just depends.

Matt commented that Connie wrote on her resume that she likes to drive around Murray and look at people's yards. He knew she would be a great fit for the board!

Geneal produced a copy of the District Map so that Connie would be able to know what area her district covered. Geneal told Connie that the district map can be found on the city website and also told her how to zoom in on the map.

Grant Discussion

Grants may be applied for from July 1-September 1st. Darin suggested they talk about the grant while driving around to judge the yards. Dr. Evans thought a formal meeting might be needed to decide what they wanted to do as their project. The last project was great, but a lot of work for Matt. Matt asked if they needed to have another meeting.

Matt will call Monica Rockwood, Interpretive Media Specialist at the Utah Department of Natural Resources who is a wealth of knowledge about the types of materials to use that hold up well to both weather and vandalism.

The grant idea being considered is a walking tour of the arboretum with signs that have a QR code. Citizens can then use their phone to look up information about the tree. A map of all the trees on the route will be needed.

Darin explained that the beauty of the grant application is that not all the details are needed to apply, just the proposal along with the estimated cost. Grant approvals happen pretty quickly after the deadline. This year the match is up to \$10,000. The last time Murray applied it was \$8,000. The grant is sponsored by the State Division of Forestry which has an Urban Forestry program. All communities in the State can apply for a grant. In the past, the Community Forester, Jeran Farley, has attended the board meetings and shared ideas for grants. Murray City was awarded a grant 2 years ago. The board designed and printed a brochure about tree maintenance, tree planting and what type of trees are good to plant in park strips. Brochures went out in a mailing and are also displayed at City Hall.

Cori Brown said that a lot of it is just maintaining them. She just planted a bunch and then tore out 15 that weren't planted right that she had planted 4 years ago, and they were just the wrong tree. She went to a nursery and that's what they told her.

Cori Brown said that she thought a lot of humanitarian money will be available. Anything we can do to help would be good. Maybe the homeless could be trained to take care of trees. She can't find anyone to trim her trees and she needs someone who knows what they are doing because she has a lot of hornbeam trees that require maintenance. She went on to say that planting pine trees are big; making sure you have pine trees in your yard is important. Darin added that they take a lot of space and grow big and fast. Cori Brown said that the other part is deciding which ones to plant. That's the hard part and then rather than paying someone to do it it's better to learn how to do it on your own. She learned how to separate irises yesterday from watching YouTube. So now she's an expert. Trees are intimidating she went on to say. To know what to do and you get one planted and then how is it going to grow up?

Darin said that the big thing for the board is to just let citizens know what's available in Murray City, especially the park strip trees. The City will trim those for people and there's a cost, but when you weigh the cost over the life of the tree, it's an incredible deal to have the City plant them. The city plants and trims them correctly.

Matt added that having trees increases property values. Cori Brown concurred saying it increases the property value and then they are all the same along the street, it looks so beautiful.

Darin stated that he is open if the board wants to add another meeting to discuss the grant later this month or in July. It would be good to remind everyone what questions are asked on the grant application. Matt is going to download the application to look at it.

Geneal? Asked if there was a city that has done the signs and QR codes and if so, could the board look at it, so they have more direction?

The board couldn't remember if another city had done that project. Darin said that he would ask Jeran if there are any examples the board could look at.

Dr. Evans added that she thought they would be ok if only the idea was needed by the September deadline. She had thought it was the whole project that would need to be outlined.

Darin wondered if they are going to be together for several hours looking at yards, then they could discuss and make a decision at that point and decide as to whether a second July meeting needed to be held.

Dr. Evans thought that visiting about it over the judging would be ample time to discuss the grant.

Geneal suggested it be discussed at the end of July so they could fine tune the grant application and then not do September's meeting.

Matt pointed out that the September meeting is going to be at the City Council Chambers where the beautification awards will be given.

Dr. Evans said that they could meet when they need to. They aren't limited to one meeting per month.

Darin pulled up the grant application to review the questions. Darin felt like the questions were pretty easy:

Project Objective

Description of how the grant would be used (attach additional sheets to that)

Proposed budget

He emphasized that it would be good to make sure the grant reviewers had enough information to understand the project.

Dr. Evans asked the question, "Why do we want to do this? Our response is?"

The board answered, "education". Getting information and making it available to the public is the goal. Dr. Evans, (playing the devil's advocate) asked, "what kind of information"?

The board answered that the arboretum has perfect examples of what trees grow well in Murray. It also lets citizens know that there is an arboretum.

Darin mentioned the beautiful thing about it being electronic is that it can easily be added onto. If a heritage tree is discovered later, it could be added at any time. The board is excited to find and add more of those trees.

Darin told the board that at the State site at the Point of the Mountain is an Apollo tree. Years ago, during the Apollo mission, they took some seeds into space and then gave seeds to the states. Utah's seeds were planted at what was once the State nursery. The nursery has since been privatized and is where Murray City purchases the little saplings for Arbor Day. Darin explained that the wildfire firefighters have been there but are now being moved out to make way for the expansion of the Utah State prison. The hope is the tree will be in such a spot that the contractors can work around it.

Dr. Evans suggested in addition to the virtual tour there would need to be page/handout or bookmark letting the community know that it is available. Adding mailing costs to the application might be appropriate. She said, "it's nice to do this but it would be better if someone knew they had done it". For example, letting schoolteachers know the virtual tour and QR codes were available to use would be important. Matt thinks that Judith would have a lot of good ideas to help with that. Dr. Evans wanted to be sure to make sure private schools were aware of the tour.

Matt said that the information could be included with the bills. Dr. Evans asked if it is still OK to do because the billing company has changed. Matt felt that it would still be ok to do.

Cori Brown asked if Wheeler Farm falls under Murray. Darin informed her that Wheeler Farm is Salt Lake County. She also asked what she could do to be involved. She was looking for something and the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission was the only one that sounded fun. She expressed concern because she doesn't have a district. Matt suggested possibly volunteering at Arbor Day and told her he would get her a copy of the Tree Care brochure.

Dr. Evans asked about the minutes from the last meeting. There were no minutes from the last meeting. The April meeting was the Murray City Arbor Day celebration held at the Murray City Arboretum.

Matt reminded the Shade Tree and Beautification board of the following:

All board members need to look at yards and get 2-3 addresses to Matt PRIOR to the July 13th meeting.

July 3rd Parade Route at 8:00 am

July 13th Murray City Power Office at 9:00 am (Judging to be done for the beautification awards and some grant discussion. Matt will have a few copies of the grant application.)

Darin asked if there was any other business to conduct. With no other business to conduct the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 pm. Meeting was recorded by Matt Erkelens and transcribed by Barbara Ishino.