

Beautification Commission Minutes
Wednesday, August 14, 2024
6:00 pm
Novi Civic Center
45175 10 Mile Rd.
Mayor's Conference Room

Call to Order: 6:02 pm

Roll Call: Yogesh Kumar, Jan Lach, Christen Pietraz, Laura Williams, Mary Angela Winter, Torry Yu

Present: Yogesh Kumar, Jan Lach, Laura Williams, Torry Yu

Absent Excused: Mary Angela Winter

Absent – Christen Pietraz

Approval of Agenda: Moved: Williams, Seconded: Yu, Approved 4:0

Approval of Minutes – May 8, 2024: Moved: Williams, Seconded: Yu, Approved 4:0

The discussion portion of the meeting was opened by welcoming the new Commissioner Yogesh Kumar.

Old Business:

1. Pollinator Library Display Reflection

Ms. Oppermann informed the group of the positive feedback received to date for the library display on pollinators (particularly native bees). Library staff was particularly complimentary and welcomed any future displays the Commission might be interested in doing. The Commission suggested that a future board could be focused on honeybees/hives (given the planned installation for 2025). The current board will be removed around Labor Day and materials retained, where possible, for future use.

New Business:

1. Perennial Exchange Revitalization – Saturday, September 21st, 9am -11am

It has been planned to bring back the Perennial Exchange Program, last active under the Commission in 2017. The new program is intended as a collaboration between Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services (PRCS) and the Beautification Commission. The Commission will be distributing native, pollinator-friendly plants to residents in attendance and Fire Cpt. Thiesen has been invited to lead a talk about the importance of pollinators.

Commissioners Kumar, Lach, and Williams volunteered to be present at the event in addition to Staff Liaison Oppermann.

In addition to the giveaway plants the Commissioners asked that there be handouts about

pollinators available for their table.

Staff Liaison Oppermann has contacted two local vendors regarding giveaway plants (Wild Type Plants and Michiganense Natives), including if they recommend particular plants from their stock that will do well for planting in late September. She will update the Commission at the next meeting or earlier regarding what she hears back so final decisions can be made.

Commissioner Yogesh asked that the event be advertised on the City Webpage. Ms. Oppermann assured that, as an event in collaboration with PRCS the event will be thoroughly advertised both online and in the Engage magazine.

2. Next Steps for Bee Hives

Ms. Oppermann went over the proposed Pilot Program location requirements such as:

- sufficient space to ensure a minimum of 20 feet sidewalks (to avoid being stung it is recommended to keep a distance of 10 to 20 feet away from honeybee or bumble bee nests, though typically colonies are quite docile per Cpt. Thiesen).
- Adequate Sunlight
- Water Source
- Sufficient plantings within a reasonable distance

The proposed early Spring 2025 timeline was also discussed as well as potential programming opportunities that the hives could provide in the future.

Ms. Oppermann also shared Cpt. Theisen's warning that Bees naturally swarm and are also looking for a better home. We may lose a colony to swarming. They also need to be very strong to over winter. Dead outs (colony doesn't make it) is also a realistic expectation for the first few years. He has great success, but beekeeping can be very up and down.

The current budgetary needs for the pilot are estimated at approx. \$3,000.00.

3. Roundtable Discussion

Commissioner Kumar suggested that the Department of Public Works could consider intentionally planting trees that display beautiful Autumnal color, like that he is privileged to have in his older-build subdivision. He would like the City Forester to provide tree lists for those that might be more beautiful/ornamental as well as good for the area – "elegant natives."

The Commission decided they would like to try Social Media sharing events once more for Autumnal and Winter/Holiday Light décor. Ms. Oppermann will coordinate with the Community Relations team to publish these in October and December respectively.

Commissioner Williams shared the Michigan Beekeepers Association Fall Conference as a potential "Field Trip" for the group however, upon discovering that the location for 2024 is almost 4 hours away they group determined that they would consider it or similar conferences for further in the future instead, particularly if there are opportunities nearer to Novi.

Public Comment: none

Adjournment: 6:37 pm

Upcoming Meetings: 9/11, 10/9, 11/13, 12/11