

AGAWAM BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

July 18, 2023

Members Present:

Violet Baldwin – Chair
Paul Paleologopoulos
Tara Cross
Marianne Joyce

Members Absent:

Krista Sapelli
Gina Fusick
William Raymond
Karla Callahan

Also Present:

Stefanie Kesecker
Al Fini

Chairperson Baldwin called the meeting to order at 3:05pm.

1. Approval of Minutes-June 20, 2023

Motion was made by Ms. Joyce and seconded by Mr. Paleologopoulos to approve the June 20, 2023 meeting minutes.

VOTE 4-0-0

2. Barrels

Ms. Baldwin stated at the last Committee meeting it had been discussed to use the monochromatic color we have been using in years past for the barrels, as it is the signature color for the Town. Ms. Cross stated she liked the current purple magenta color of the barrel petunias. Mr. Paleologopoulos stated he liked the color we are currently using and asked about alternative colors. Mr. Fini stated he had placed a few white petunias in with the purple magenta in front of the Agawam Historical Fire House. He stated if the Committee wanted to use white petunias with the purple magenta petunias that next barrel season he would just put one white in the middle, because the white seemed to overtake the two barrels at this location. Mr. Fini stated the white snow drift petunias are a very aggressive plant. He stated he would need to know the Committee's selection by the beginning of October. Ms. Joyce stated she liked the current color as well, and she agrees the white petunias overtook the colored petunias. Ms. Baldwin feels the Town color stands apart from other towns. Ms. Baldwin stated at the next meeting when more members were present we would discuss having more than barrels next year.

Motion was made by Ms. Cross and seconded by Ms. Joyce to keep this item on the agenda.

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VOTE 4-0-0

3. Pynchon Point

Ms. Baldwin stated at the last Committee meeting the members had discussed the ongoing burden of care for this location. Ms. Baldwin stated a cleanup was done at the beginning of the season and it was costly. She went on to say the area gets a lot of use from people fishing, camping, squatting, and parking to go to the restaurant across the street. She stated people litter here frequently. She asked the Committee if they had interest in this project. Ms. Cross asked if it was affordable for the Committee. Ms. Baldwin stated it was affordable, but this area was unlike Main Street that only require cleanups once or twice a year. This project would be much more involved and time consuming because of the volume of trash here and that may not be affordable. She went on to advise the Committee this is a high maintenance area. Mr. Paleologopoulos stated he saw the DPW there this week. Ms. Baldwin stated DPW does empty the Town trash barrels at the location, and possibly mows. Ms. Baldwin stated the maintenance of the beds and going down to the waterfront is not being maintained and is messy. She stated that some of the fence panels that abut the trucking company have been damaged due to trucks backing into them. She stated several years ago the Beautification Committee replaced several sections of this fencing, but it is damaged again. Ms. Joyce questioned why the trucking company who was damaging the panels were not replacing them. Ms. Baldwin stated she had gone to the trucking company to speak with them as well as sending letters and she received a response that stated various trucking companies use this lot to park and they were not sure which truck had damaged the fence. Ms. Baldwin stated perhaps DPW or Highway/Grounds Departments could assist with this, if the Committee reaches out to them. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if there was any clubs at the Agawam High School that would assist with this proposed project. Ms. Baldwin responded stated in past years Boy Scouts had assisted and that was normally handled through Christopher Sparks the Director of Parks and Recreation. She stated the Boy Scouts wanted more than cleanup projects and they wanted to build things. She stated the Boy Scouts did the Library project with the stone wall on the side. Ms. Baldwin stated they has also been church groups who have helped with cleanup in the past, but that was ceased due to liability. Ms. Joyce asked about the River clean up that is already being done. Ms. Kesecker suggested she could reach out to Sheryl Becker with the Conservation Commission who is already involved in this project. Ms. Baldwin stated she would like to approach the restaurant across the street to see if they would consider sponsorship, as they have use of the parking lot. Mr. Fini stated whoever owns the property should be handling the upkeep.

Motion was made by Mr. Paleologopoulos and seconded by Ms. Cross to keep this item on the agenda.

VOTE 4-0-0

4. Correspondence

Ms. Cross stated she had received correspondence on the Facebook Beautification Committee page inquiring why there were not barrels on Suffield Street this year. She informed the Committee that she had explained the infestation problems we had had with the barrels in that area last season and the Committee had decided the plants would prosper in other areas of Town.

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Ms. Baldwin stated the Town Hall project had been on hold as she has not received a clear answer on whether there is water access at this location, so it would be futile to pay for plantings if they would not survive. She stated it was her understanding that there are sprinklers at Town Hall, but it's unknown if they are functioning. Ms. Baldwin stated before spending money to replace items or add new plants the access to water needs to be known. Ms. Cross agreed. Mr. Paleologopoulos and Ms. Joyce agreed to wait until access to water is established.

Ms. Baldwin spoke about the recent project at the Agawam Senior Center the beds are looking nice but one small scrub has died, so she will speak to Decaro Landscaping. She also mentioned the weeds now growing in this area, and is concerned. Ms. Baldwin stated she may speak to the Legal Department for future projects where CPA or Beautification Funds are used to see if there can be some type of contract that both parties' responsibilities are clearly outlined. Ms. Cross expressed her agreement. Ms. Joyce questioned how this would be binding. Ms. Baldwin stated this would inhibit them from coming back to the Beautification Committee or CPA for future projects.

Ms. Baldwin stated the DPW job had been completed, but of the four outside faucets, only two are functioning, so hoses had to be purchased. She stated she has spoken to Mario Mazza, DPW Superintendent as well as his assistant Tracy DeMaio about placing soaker hoses since some of the plants are not thriving and some may need replaced. She went on to say that the Weeping Cherry Tree near the entrance will need removed, due to drainage issues. She stated the Committee was not informed of this prior to planting the tree. Ms. Joyce asked if the tree could be replanted. Ms. Baldwin stated not in that area and with some reconfiguration a fern could possibly be planted.

Ms. Kesecker informed the Committee that she had taken the barrel flier advertisement and sponsor form off the website as the program has ended for the season. She also communicated that one more donation of \$100.00 had been received for the barrel program.

Ms. Baldwin stated she and Ms. Kesecker would work on drafting a letter to the paper to thank the sponsors for the barrel program this year and Ms. Cross could also place that letter, once approved on the Facebook page.

5. Any topics the Chair did not reasonably anticipate.

Ms. Joyce asked about the memorial stones on the River Walk and if the Committee did this to raise money. Ms. Baldwin stated yes this is an open program. Ms. Joyce suggested promoting this again through advertisement to generate some revenue. Mr. Fini expressed his concern that this project took a great effort. Ms. Baldwin stated the project did very well pre-Covid. Ms. Kesecker stated she would check old invoices to see the cost of the pavers. Ms. Baldwin stated we could also advertise this in the paper.

Motion was made by Mr. Paleologopoulos and seconded by Ms. Cross to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE 4-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.