

City of El Paso, Illinois

Beautification Committee meeting minutes for July 16, 2018

The El Paso Beautification Committee met Monday, July 16 at 6 p.m., prior to the council meeting. Council members present were Jennie Kearney, chair, Ellen Rigsby and Mary Ellen Kilpatrick. Also present were Jack Hickok and Dave Fever.

Jennie agreed to combine some of the approved small-medium-large tree lists used in other Illinois communities and contact Terry Everett to see if he would be willing review the list to make recommendations and notes.

Sandee Kessinger had suggested that the council send thank you notes to the residents/groups who adopted flowerbeds this year. The committee agreed. Sandee left some blank thank you cards and is sending the list of names to Jennie. Jennie will bring the cards to the next meeting for the council to sign.

Changes were suggested to the adopt-a-flowerbed program, including that the Parks and Recreation department request volunteers in the fall for the next spring's flowerbeds, and that the city commit to watering the flowerbeds. The group agreed that watering the flowerbeds may be the most logistically difficult step, and removing that obstacle may encourage more people to adopt a flowerbed. The committee also recommended that not-too-tall ornamental grasses be planted in any unadopted flowerbeds. Another note was that there are some dead/dying shrubs behind the Franklin Park sign that need to be cut back or removed.

The group expressed appreciation for the freshly painted park signs. Ellen said she received positive comments about the parks in town during the car show July 7.

Jack noted that he stops in the parks frequently to speak to anyone at the pavilions, and he always asks them where they're from if he does not recognize them, and then asks what made them stop in town. He said their responses indicate people do pull off the highway to pick up a meal and eat at the parks because of the signs, as they prefer eating in a small city park rather than a state rest stop.

The committee discussed the Welcome to El Paso sign north of town and ultimately recommended that the old sign be removed. Although the committee liked several elements of the proposed sign, there were several suggestions for changes. The decision on a new sign will be tabled until additional research is completed. Farnsworth group may be consulted for recommendations.

There was brief mention of murals in other communities as well as grant programs that may provide funding for improvements.

Ellen and Jack recommended that those in attendance keep their eyes open when visiting other communities to see examples of signage, flowers and murals that draw attention and look appealing. They recommended Ottawa, Washington, Belvidere, and Pontiac, among others.

Next meeting: The Beautification Committee agreed to meet quarterly. The next meeting will be 6 p.m. Oct. 1, prior to the regular City Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennie Kearney, chair of the Beautification Committee.