



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0183, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Discussion Item: Future Mission & Purpose of the Beautification Task Force (Postponed from the March 2021 Regular Meeting)

SUBMITTED BY: Allie Ferko, MMC, Deputy City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This item is a continuation of the discussion from the February and March 2021 Beautification Task Force meetings.

The Task Force will discuss the following items related to the future of the group:

1. Does the group feel it has enough work to continue as a task force/commission or can the group sunset, with beautification topics absorbed into other city functions or commissions?
2. If the group feels it has enough work to continue, which meeting body type is the most appropriate?
 - a. Task Force - Task or time based scope with mission, purpose, goals, and member composition outlined in a City Council approved resolution.
 - b. Commission - Permanent meeting body with mission, purpose, and member composition codified in a City Council approved ordinance.
3. If the group feels it has enough work to continue, items to discuss:
 - a. What is the group's mission statement?
 - b. What is the group's purpose and scope?
 - c. What are the top four group goals?
 - d. What should the member composition be regarding number of members and term length?

- e. If the group continues as a task force, what should the tasks or time length be to accomplish its purpose and goals?

Points to consider during the discussion:

- The Task Force does not currently have fiscal authority or a budget with which it can freely spend. The “Beautification” 350 reserve account requires city manager or City Council approval for expenditures. This is a reserve account, not an operational account, and funding is limited.

Over the past five years, the main expenditures out of this account have been for the Beautification Matching Grant Program (advertising and actual grant funds), support for Task Force meetings (lunch and office supplies), and minor incidentals related to past Beautification efforts (such as replacement snowflake lights or holiday rope lights for the Egan Street light poles).

- City construction projects are now handled by the City Capital Facilities Department. The Beautification Task Force would not be responsible for project management as it was during the Egan Street Beautification Project.
 - Projects must be placed on the city project list and are prioritized for funding based upon City Council priorities.
 - Any beautification ideas potentially developed by the group would need to be submitted each fall for consideration during this process.
 - Projects may be placed on the list, but not given priority for funding until several years later.
 - Projects cannot simply be started mid-budget cycle unless there is an emergent need to justify that timeline.
 - Several projects suggested by the Beautification Task Force, such as the wayfinding project and addressing the gazebo on the Richardson Highway, are already on the city projects list.
 - Construction projects, such as the town square concept, must go through this type of process (instead of being a project managed by the Task Force).
 - Once projects are funded, they are assigned a project manager, usually within the City Capital Facilities Department (or, in some instances other departments, such as the wayfinding project assigned to the City Economic Development Department).
 - Public outreach and input efforts related to design of projects are now handled exclusively by the project manager and/or project contractor as part of the standard management process.
- The City now has a full-time code enforcement officer, whose primary duty is to enforce compliance with certain sections of Valdez Municipal Code. Many of the concerns raised by the Beautification Task Force in the past related to code enforcement or nuisance abatement issues are now received and addressed by this staff member. *(I have asked him to be present at the meeting today to answer any questions the Task Force might have related to the Code Enforcement Program.*
- The City Comprehensive Plan, Waterfront Master Plan, and Parks & Recreation Master Plan outline community vision and needs in the next five to ten years, which includes some of the beautification

ideas previously discussed by the Task Force. Once these ideas are ready for implementation, they will be managed by staff/contractors, not by the Beautification Task Force.

- With all of this in mind and based on past Task Force input/ideas, below are two suggestions for tasks the group might consider for the future **(these are simply ideas to help start discussion amongst the Task Force)**:
 - **Continuation of Beautification Matching Grant Program**
 - Tasks: Continued review of program criteria prior to advertising each year. Review of applications and recommendations of grant awardees to City Council.
 - Composition: The review/recommendation group could be appointed annually by City Council resolution as part of the grant program process. These tasks could also be reassigned to an existing commission, such as the Economic Diversification Commission or Planning & Zoning Commission.
 - Timeframe: This program would sunset when either funding for the program ceases or there is not enough community interest to continue awarding grants.
 - **Creation of a Community Beautification Guide or Publication**
 - Task: Publication could be a reference document for builders or set of recommendations related to beautification for new or substantial construction in both the public and private sectors. Could include topics such as aesthetic recommendations, incorporation of artwork or murals, incorporation of Alaska Native cultural elements, or other topics.
 - Timeframe/Composition: Short term (six month to one year) project outlined in a resolution which must first be approved by City Council. Process potentially managed/facilitated by an architecture/landscaping consultant experienced with drafting this type of document, in conjunction with the current Beautification Task Force. Group would sunset following adoption by City Council of the first guide/publication. Document would then be automatically reviewed/revised in the future as an element of the review/revision to the City Comprehensive Plan.