

HORTICULTURE COMMISSION MEETING

June 3, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The hearing was called to order by Mr. Parker at 9:36 a.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Mrs. Marchand

Members present: Rob Barry, Todd Parker, Gary Bullock, Chad Danos, Mitch Mayes, Cole Sims, Rusty Ruckstuhl and Dr. Ed Bush representing Dr. William Richardson.

Members absent: Richard Hill, Dan Johnson, Steven Hoover and Dr. Ansel Rankins

A quorum was present.

Others present: Paeton Burkett, LDAF Legal Counsel; Tina Peltier, LDAF; Marsha Dugas, LDAF; and Andrea Marchand, LDAF.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments; however, Mr. Parker introduced Mrs. Marsha Dugas as the new Assistant Director for Horticulture and Ms. Paeton Burkett as the AES legal counsel to the board members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Sims made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2020 hearing. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ruckstuhl and it passed unanimously.

SET NEXT HEARING DATE

The next Horticulture Commission meeting will be held September 2, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., in the Veterans' Memorial Auditorium.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

REINSTATEMENT REQUESTS

Mr. John Joseph Keiper requested to have his arborist license reinstated. **Motion:** Mr. Mayes made a motion to require that Mr. Keiper obtain the required continuing education credits prior to issuing a reinstatement. This motion was seconded by Mr. Danos and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Renee Pitzer requested to have her retail florist license reinstated. **Motion:** Mr. Sims made a motion to reinstate. This motion was seconded by Mr. Bullock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

At 10:02 a.m. roll was called again to insure a quorum was presently maintained. A quorum was present.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business

Director's Report:

Mrs. Peltier gave the following updates:

Staffing Changes: In January, Marissa Smith was promoted to Administrative Assistant 4 and is responsible for assisting the Assistant Director with all Horticulture Commission related duties. In March, Angelique Williams made a lateral move from Administrative Coordinator III to an Administrative Assistant III. Her job duties now include processing exam application and licenses for Landscape Architects, processing Sweet Potato permits and handling the purchasing for Horticulture & Quarantine. In April, Marsha Dugas accepted the position of Assistant Director. Marsha has been with our department for 24 years, including being an AES inspector in the Baton Rouge district. Paeton Burkett was hired as the AES staff attorney.

Citrus Canker Confirmations: On January 8, 2021 we received confirmation of a positive citrus canker find in St. Martin parish. The sample was obtained from a satsuma tree by PPQ at a private residence in Broussard. This was the first positive find for the parish. On January 25, 2021 a delimiting survey of the one mile radius around the positive find was conducted. Twelve inspections were performed on 34 trees; one sample was taken and reported as negative for citrus canker. USDA obtained three additional samples from the original property and all came back positive for citrus canker. The positive tree varieties were satsuma and grapefruit. Eight additional trees on the property have been inspected and are not showing any canker symptoms at this time. According to USDA, the homeowner did not wish to have the trees removed. The freeze in February affected the citrus in the area, so the two mile survey of the area around the positive find was delayed until May. On May 3 and May 5, the second survey was conducted by USDA and LDAF personnel. Twelve locations and 23 citrus trees were inspected. No citrus canker symptoms were found on the citrus, therefore no samples were taken. The citrus inspected during both surveys included satsuma, grapefruit, and sweet orange. The parishes involved in the survey included St. Martin, Lafayette and Iberia. USDA will continue to survey the area each month for at least the next six months. Thank you to the USDA and Opelousas district personnel for their participation in the survey.

GRKN Confirmations: On March 24, 2021 a routine nematode sample, taken in Natchitoches, tested positive for Guava Root Knot Nematode. The GRKN poses a threat to our nursery and commercial vegetable industries as well as our sweet potato, sugarcane, cotton, and soybean crops. The GRKN was detected on foxtail ferns that originated from a nursery in Florida. Upon notification of the sample results, the Florida Department of Plant Industry immediately suspended all shipments into Louisiana from the nursery. A trace forward investigation determined that 34 locations in Louisiana received plants from the nursery and all seven of our districts were involved. All of the foxtail ferns originating from the nursery (36) were double bagged and disposed of. Seventy-two (72) additional samples were taken from different varieties of nursery stock that originated from the nursery in Florida. All of the samples were reported negative for GRKN. The Florida DPI performed a delimiting survey within the nursery and all of the samples were reported negative for root-knot nematodes. On May 21, 2021, the nursery was allowed to begin shipping into Louisiana under the condition they provide a 48 hour pre-shipment notification to LDAF. This will allow our inspectors to sample additional plant material originating from the nursery.

Phytophthora ramorum: On December 15, 2020 a follow up inspection was performed at the *P. ramorum* confirmed positive nursery. The remaining plants in the original Quarantine Block were found to be healthy and were released for sale. As required by federal regulations, the first round of bi-annual sampling is scheduled for June 11, 2021. Approximately 330 samples will be taken by USDA and LDAF personnel. The nursery will continue to undergo periodic inspections over the next three years as required by the federal regulations. The nursery is still allowed to ship interstate as long as they provide notification with the shipments.

CAPS surveys: Currently our inspectors are working the Solanaceous, Citrus Commodity and SOD Surveys. The Forest Pest Survey will start July 1st.

Box Tree Moth: Box Tree Moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*) was first reported in Europe in 2007, and then spread quickly across European countries then into Western Asia and Northern Africa. It was first detected in Canada in 2018. BTM primarily feeds on boxwoods and heavy infestations can defoliate host plants. The larvae feed on the leaves of the plant and will consume the bark next, leading to plant death. BTM can be spread long distances by the movement of infested boxwoods. In April 2021, BTM was confirmed in a nursery in Ontario, Canada. Between August 2020 and March 2021, the nursery shipped to six states with the United States including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio and South Carolina. The moth has already been detected in nurseries in South Carolina and Connecticut. Trace investigations are being conducted at this time. Our plans are to gather information from our nursery and retail outlets to determine if any boxwoods or host plants in our state were sourced from any of the six states that have received shipments from Canada. A Federal Order (DA-2021-11) was issued May 26, 2021 prohibiting the importation of the host plants, *Buxus* spp. (boxwood), *Euonymus* spp. (burning brush), and *Ilex* spp. (holly), from Canada.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments; however, Mr. Parker commented that Mrs. Peltier had given a great report. Mr. Parker also took a moment to thank the commission members and wish all a wonderful summer, to be safe and that he looks forward to seeing all, in person, for the September 2, 2021 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Mayes made a motion to adjourn at 10:34 a.m. This motion was seconded by Mr. Sims and passed unanimously.