**Mayor Milissa Holland’s remarks at Garden Club Arbor Day Tree Dedication May 2017**

It’s an honor for me to be here today representing the Palm Coast City Council to commemorate this 2017 partnership between the City and the Garden Club. Our ongoing commitment to each other continues to flourish over the years – much like the trees we have planted here together.

I want to thank the Garden Club of Palm Coast for donating another exquisite tree that adds such beauty to our landscape. This is the 7th tree planted in Central Park by the Garden Club, and they’ve also planted a tree at all five of our fire stations. It’s appropriate timing since we just celebrated Arbor Day this past weekend, and we were able to give away 400 trees to residents here in Palm Coast who will plant them in their yards throughout our beautiful city.

We are very proud of the relationship we have with our community. It strengths every single time. As far as Tree City USA, we are in our 12th year of being recognized as a Tree City USA in the City of Palm Coast.

Today, we are honoring those who gave back also to our community to provide such beauty and tor provide what we’ve all come to cherish here in Palm Coast.

This Muskogee crape myrtle is a fast-growing tree that will have an abundance of lavender purple flowers blooming during the summer. This hybrid was developed in the early 1960s by the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., and given the name of the native American Indian tribe “Muskogee.” This variety has become one of the most widely planted crape myrtles in the United States.

The roots of this Muskogee crape myrtle are planted here in the rich earth here in Central Park.

This tree serves as a symbol of peace, energy and friendship for all of our Palm Coast community, and it’s only fitting that it’s housed here in Central Park as we often refer to Central Park as the heart of our City.

Today as we dedicate this beautiful Muskogee crape myrtle in memory of Joyce Birrell and Dorothy Leary, this ceremony is another reminder that we – our community – is rooted in nature. And this tree will forever stand as a symbol of our commitment to the environment and to each other as friends and neighbors.

We thank you for coming out today and for honoring two great members of our community that really did contribute to the beauty that we get to see today. Thank you.