

MINUTES
CITY OF BEAUFORT PARK AND TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION
November 19, 2015 3:00 pm
Planning Department Conference Room, City Hall – 1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort, South Carolina

In accordance with South Carolina Code of laws, 1976, Section 30-480(d), as amended, local media were duly notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting.

Members present

Barb Farris
Michael Brock
Leah Palumbo

Members absent

Jim Arnett
William Waskiewicz

Staff present

Eliza Hill, Planning Department

Guests

Edna Horne
Barbara Chemsak
Alice Howard

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Farris called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion, second by Mr. Brock, to approve the minutes of June 25, 2015 and August 27, 2015 as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

EAGLE SCOUT PUBLIC ART PROJECT: TIC TOC PLAYGROUND

Ms. Hill described the project: Collin Durham presented to Council and received approval for the removal of damaged chain link fence sections at Tic Toc and installation of living fence with vine as replacement.

FRIENDS OF SOUTHSIDE PARK AND SOUTHSIDE PARK UPDATE

Barbara Chemsak said that the group is trying to raise awareness about the park project and said the top priority is the dog park. Ms. Hill said Graybar Fence has stated that the project will start the first week of December. The next phase would be the walking trails. Ms. Chemsak asked if the first portion of the trail could be in the Southside Blvd. buffer area rather than the currently proposed trail section that would link the Beaufort County tennis courts with the dog

park. PTAC did not object to this change and generally agreed this would benefit the neighborhood more. Ms. Hill stated the SS Blvd. buffer was clear and thus marking the trail through this area should not be difficult. If trail were to remain in southern portion of park, bush hogging of area by Public Works would need to occur first. Ms. Chemsak and **Edna Horne** agreed that installation of trail in front buffer may draw more attention for park development

Ms. Chemsak said **Robert Semmler** seems interested in developing a playground in the front buffer as per the CMP. She asked how the Friends of Southside Park “should interact with PTAC and the City.” Ms. Hill said as they generate ideas for the park, they should come to PTAC and present/discuss.

Alice Howard said the county’s pavilion at Southside Park has been badly damaged, and there’s been a work request in for it for quite a while. It’s next to the tennis courts.

Ms. Chemsak said, in regard to the playground, when the old fire station is put up for sale, the land that is the Mossy Oaks playground could be sold. She suggested proceeds from the sale be earmarked for playground construction at SSP. Chairman Farrior said Mossy Oaks is in demand as a residential location because of the school and because it’s affordable. There might be someone who wants to develop it.

Chairman Farrior asked if the playground equipment could be relocated for use in future SSP playground? Ms. Hill said yes. She stated same was done with some of the old equipment that was in Pigeon Point Park before renovation. Mr. Brock asked if the equipment by the fire station had been evaluated by a certified playground inspector. Ms. Hill said no but also stated the swing and Sky Rail purchased in 2007 as well as the table and bench combinations would be acceptable for transfer. Ms. Howard said the firemen had said at one time they would help with building a playground.

Chairman Farrior asked what can be done to move forward. Ms. Chemsak said, “Money.” Once the Facebook page is created, the Friends of Southside Park can provide manpower and “can put things into place.” The playground is in the same area as the walking trail. Ms. Hill said they have enough asphalt millings to do half to three-quarters of the entire trail. There was enough for the whole trail when it was 6’ wide; it’s to be 10’ wide now. She stated the trail was originally laid out in the SS Blvd. buffer and BJWSA actually started on initial excavation work but this forward progress stopped when master plan for park was undergoing change from the original plan generated by Brian Coffman and the SSP Advisory Committee.

Chairman Farrior asked what is the next step for establishing the trail. Ms. Hill said BJWSA still owes the city in-kind work. Joe Devito is aware and has promised they would return to continue this in kind work. Ms. Hill there is also a large group of Marine volunteers who have worked on the Spanish Moss Trail and they have said they will help with this trail.

Ms. Hill said Mr. DeVito could be invited to the next PTAC meeting. Ms. Chemsak said they can ask him what it is owed by BJWSA. Mr. Brock said they can mention that they have labor from

the Marines and winter is the best time to do this kind of work. It could be done in 3 weekends. Ms. Hill said the Marines come forward fairly quickly; they don't have equipment but could spread the millings as BJWSA dumps them in the trail.

Chairman Farrow said maybe the *Beaufort-Gazette* would like to do an article on the trail. Mr. Brock said the Friends could start a 501c3 and a bank account, so donations and city money could be "locked down," not just go through the "Pride of Place" program. Ms. Chemsak said that Friends can be under the umbrella of Pride of Place because it is expensive to form a 501c3. Ms. Hill said there's a donation card on the website, and you can say how you want it to be used. Ms. Howard said an organization could donate to the park that way, too.

Chairman Farrow asked what can be done to affect some progress. She is glad to call Mr. DeVito and invite him to come to the December 17th PTAC meeting, or find out if there are other, more convenient dates, and Ms. Hill said she can call the Marine commander.

Ms. Chemsak said the Friends are on board with having a portion of the de-acquisitioned properties' money go to Southside Park; especially from the sale of the fire station and the Mossy Oaks playground, Ms. Howard added. Mr. Brock said PTAC is on board with that, too, and Southside Park should be a priority for the city. Ms. Hill said she believes it is. Chairman Farrow said that's why she wants it to move along.

Ms. Chemsak said the Southside Boulevard sidewalk project is also supposed to be happening in January. Ms. Hill said she would contact Mr. Semmler about meeting with someone in regard to the playground project on Hilton Head Island.

ARBOR DAY

December 4, Ms. Hill said, is Arbor Day. She's been working on the Tree City USA application. The Beaufort Garden Club, Beaufort Council of Garden Clubs, Palmetto Garden Club, and **Libby Anderson** all want to contribute a tree. There's no program yet, and it probably won't take place "in one particular place." The Beaufort Garden Club wants to contribute a magnolia, and so does Ms. Anderson; the Beaufort Council of Garden Clubs is contributing a River Birch to be planted at Waterfront Park as replacement for one that was removed for the West Street Extension renovation. The Palmetto Garden Club is making a donation in memory of a garden club member. Ms. Hill said she would like to plant very small live oaks along the Spanish Moss Trail at the city gateway entrance on Hwy 21 to provide a boulevard of live oaks for the next generation.

Brian Randall has Japanese maples and magnolias that he wants to plant on the section of trail near his business, Ms. Hill said, but it probably won't happen for Arbor Day. It will be this season, though, she told Chairman Farrow.

Ms. Hill added she had recently learned at a Trees SC conference that if you plant 100 trees, you can expect to lose 20%.

DE-ACQUISITION OF CITY PROPERTIES

Ms. Howard asked if the fire station property would be sold with or without the building on it. Chairman Farrior said it might be a neat building to convert, possibly to a residential property. Ms. Chemsak said they could maybe sell it as-is first, if someone wanted to develop it, and then if it didn't sell, the building could be demolished.

Ms. Hill said that Council is announcing properties to be auctioned known to the public at the November 24th Council meeting. The fire station is zoned residential, she said, according to Ms. Anderson. Chairman Farrior suggested building could be a loft type design. Ms. Hill suggested multi-family housing.

There was general agreement that PTAC should send a formal letter of request that funds from the sale of the property, at least the Mossy Oaks playground property, go to a parks account.

Ms. Chemsak asked if there is a PTAC fund. Chairman Farrior said no but that it has been discussed/requested. She stated PTAC has been trying to get a tree fund established for planting of trees but there has been resistance. However, for the last two years, there has been a fund established for the removal of hazard trees. Ms. Hill added that the private City contracts describe requirements for tree maintenance in the commercial core (pruning, fertilizer, pest and disease control and palm pruning) and pruning as needed for sidewalk clearance.

TREES SC AND GUFV CONFERENCES

Ms. Hill said she will put her notes together for anyone who wants to see them.

SECTION 7.3 – TREE CONSERVATION REVISIONS

The redefinition of grand trees, establishing a tree fund, and design standards as they relate to trees, have been the focus of PTAC, Ms. Hill said. The form-based code will have the same thing as the 5 bullet points that PTAC has presented for the ordinance change. Ms. Hill said this coming Monday is the kick-off meeting for the technical review committee who will be reviewing the entire form-based code. She explained the process of the committee's review. When this section that pertains to trees comes up, she will let them know, and if there is an opportunity for proponents and opponents to appear at the committee meeting.

Ms. Hill said the wording that PTAC has created is what is in the draft of the form-based code. When she had asked PTAC if the grand tree definitions should follow the transects, someone had said that a grand tree is a grand tree, no matter where it is. Ms. Hill said the T4 through T6 zones are where they get push back from developers, because the degree of urbanization in those zones makes it difficult to preserve trees. If they work with the development community, they can all win, maybe.

Landmark trees are 36" caliper and above, Ms. Hill said. They have a separate designation. In T4 – T6, you have to mitigate 50% of the inches for a landmark tree, which means to replace onsite with 50% – which didn't happen on one property in the Boundary Street Redevelopment

District that didn't get *any* mitigation – or the developer pays \$1800. Or in T1 – T3 zones, the penalty is greater, because the developer has more ability to plant back onsite. There, it's 100% plant back per caliper inch, or you have to pay \$7200.

Ms. Palumbo said a grand tree shouldn't be less important in a smaller urban area than it is in a suburban area. Ms. Hill said developers will say that they just won't develop here if there are greater penalties. Chairman Farris agreed that they would be very upset if they had to pay that much money. Ms. Hill said if the payment amounts are at this level, they may rethink the site plan to preserve more grand and landmark trees.

Ms. Hill asked if the committee is saying that the percentage or the amount per caliper inch should be less. Mr. Brock said council will say no to the total number going up. He asked about the grade of the tree being included: "That has a lot to do with it, too." There are sites that have been planned and permitted, and then you could find a tree that isn't healthy. Ms. Hill said in Savannah, that is one of many factors that designate a tree as a landmark tree or not.

Chairman Farris said any amount of mitigation will be met with resistance, she thinks. Personally, she feels it's fine, but she feels like council will resist it. Ms. Hill said this is meant to provide incentive to preserve landmark trees.

Chairman Farris asked about the old Publix site. Ms. Hill said there was to be a meeting with Harris Teeter developers, but they may have gotten cold feet. They seem amenable to what the city wants, though. Ms. Horne said she saw equipment in the parking lot there. Mr. Brock said they are probably doing boring samples. Chairman Farris said she understood they would tear down the old building and build a new one closer to the road, taking out all of the trees. Ms. Hill said that they won't take them all, but the planning department isn't seeing what it wants to see yet in their plans. A few good trees would be lost, though there are some laurel oaks that they could take out. It's still up in the air how the building would be configured. Mr. Brock said there are some nice trees on the back part of the property. Ms. Hill said liner shops are required, and per the Lady's Island Village plan, the building needs to be brought up to the street.

Ms. Chemsak said she feels the tree placement isn't good for the sight lines when exiting Family Dollar. The building is close to the street and trees planted there in front of sidewalk block views. Mr. Brock said the UDO enforces putting in the street trees, but they didn't want to. Ms. Chemsak mentioned another place where the view is similarly blocked, and she thinks the ordinance "needs to have common sense in it." Ms. Hill said what didn't occur at the Family Dollar was an SCDOT encroachment permit. She doesn't know why it wasn't applied for, and after things were planted, SCDOT contacted the city. They can make the city take street trees out. The palmettos are on private property. Ms. Chemsak said she's assuming those can be planted close to a building. Ms. Hill said yes. Ms. Horne said the trees are right under the power lines. Ms. Hill said with growth regulator, they will only get 30' high, and they won't need to be pruned by SCDOT. Chairman Farris asked how often that needs to be applied. Ms. Hill said every 3-5 years. It's a hormone that keeps everything small, but the roots will continue to grow.

There being no more business to come before the committee, **Mr. Brock made a motion, second by Ms. Palumbo, to adjourn the meeting.** The meeting passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.