

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF BEAUFORT TREE BOARD**  
April 25, 2013 3:00 pm  
**Planning 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, Chairman  
Jim Arnett  
William Waskiewicz  
Derrick Wells  
Michael Brock

**Staff present**

Eliza Hill, Planning Department

Chairman Farris called the meeting to order at 3:10 PM.

**Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mr. Arnett, to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2013 and the minutes of the meeting with the city attorney as written. The motion passed unanimously.**

**WATERFRONT PARK TREES: ASSESSMENT REPORT AND ROTARY TREE PLANTING**

Ms. Hill offered an update on the Waterfront Park assessment and said the Rotary planted four live oaks in place of the willow oaks. There was a discussion of the trees that are there now and the possibility of losing them.

**HAZARD TREE LETTER**

Ms. Hill said the board had a copy of the letter and there was discussion of the first place (1212 Boundary Street) where it might be implemented. Mr. Brock asked what should be the time frame for action by letter recipient. Mr. Arnett suggested requesting a response within 30 days and then sending notices. Mr. Wells said 60-90 days might be more fair to help the people get money together. Mr. Brock said if they gave them 30 days, within that period, they could respond that they can't afford it or get more information before getting it done. Chairman Farris said 30 days seemed to be plenty of notice, and if a tree is very hazardous, she feels they shouldn't be given too much time.

Ms. Hill said the city attorney had said that there is nothing in place to force removal. Mr. Arnett asked if there wasn't an "imminent threat clause." Ms. Hill said the city won't take a tree

down on either private property or in the public right-of-way, because it is a DOT matter. Chairman Farrow said the board approves the letter and language should be added that it needs response in 30 days; another letter will be sent out if there's not acknowledgment of the notice.

Chairman Farrow said a lawn with high uncut grass can get a large fine just for being an eyesore, but a hazard tree is a danger to the public. Mr. Brock said a tree is more of a liability, especially if it hangs over into the public right-of-way. Ms. Hill said the form-based code will cover these things. The same way people are ticketed for high lawns, a ticket can be written for trees that are "dead, dying, or hazardous."

Mr. Waskiewicz asked about the letter: if it would read better if paragraphs 2 and 3 were switched. Ms. Hill and Chairman Farrow agreed that it was a good comment. The group agreed to add the language: "A response within 30 days will be appreciated."

### **TREE BOARD TERMS AND COMPOSITION**

Ms. Hill read a letter to **Scott Dadson** about the composition and members' terms of office for the Tree Board. As an *advisory* board, Ms. Hill read, terms are unnecessary. There are three certified arborists, a landscape architect and a real estate professional on the board now. Chairman Farrow suggested that Ms. Hill add language about this being the most active and strongest Tree Board that the city has ever had. Mr. Wells suggested adding "qualified professionals in the industry volunteering their time." There was general discussion leading to "Our board is a group of qualified professionals who have a vital interest in the preservation and management of the city's urban forest."

There was a discussion of the need for rotation on a review board as opposed to on an advisory board.

### **WATERFRONT PARK TREES**

Ms. Hill said she wrote a letter in February requesting an evaluation of the health of trees in Waterfront Park. She read the letter to the board in which she advised Mr. Dadson to do this to preserve the trees' health.

### **TREE FUND**

Ms. Hill said the Tree Fund has languished because council is "mixing apples and oranges," and they want the resolution to be clean and clear so council can approve. She reviewed the definitions of mitigation and plant back. Chairman Farrow said that she had had to plant back 10 years ago and that there was little open space to accomplish this on the property.

For a commercial site, where there are no additional existing trees on site to use as mitigation and planting back is also not possible, applicant would pay into a reforestation fund, Ms. Hill said. The Tree Fund originally was going to be funded by increasing tree removal permit fees.

The tree removal fee will be increased, but if commercial applicant is able to mitigate using existing smaller, on site trees of the same species as tree requested for removal, then no payment would be made into the tree fund. Further, if applicant is able to plant back on site, then no monies are paid into tree fund.

Narrowing the definition of what a grand tree is, Ms. Hill said, should result in preservation of smaller healthier trees as well as benefit the tree fund.

Mr. Wells said the county demands that a landscape plan be in place before there's tree removal on a commercial site. There's not any provision for a tree coming out of someone's back yard unless it's something like a 30" live oak. For private property, Ms. Hill said, it will be \$15 per tree with no mitigation, etc. For commercial, people pay per tree fees for the trees that can't be mitigated.

Mr. Wells suggested keeping the ordinance as it is plus having the option of planting back or paying into the Tree Fund. A calculation based on the caliper inches being taken down would determine the amount of the fee. For example, Publix could plant back 200 caliper inches or they could have a calculation of a fee for 200" for the Tree Fund. Mr. Brock said before making a contribution to the Tree Fund, some will want to see an effort to replace trees when they can be replaced.

There was a discussion of examples of taking out trees and then not being able to plant back because of space. The county says that you either mitigate or replant Ms. Hill said. If neither is an option, the county charges \$140 per 2.5" caliper tree. All caliper inches removed are divided by this standard (2.5") and the resulting tree quantity is multiplied by \$140 to determine amount of fee to be paid to reforestation fund. The Tree Board had originally discussed a city fee of \$150 but ultimately decided on a \$250.

Ms. Hill said they could have the Tree Fund fee for residential trees and adopt the county model for commercial sites. Chairman Fariior said, "Let's try it and get this moving forward."

Ms. Hill said the current City of Beaufort definition of a grand tree is any tree at 24" or greater. In the resolution, she said, it should specifically state the definition of grand trees as 16" or greater. Laurel and water oaks, etc. are 24". They could add in American Holly, Southern Red Cedars, and live oaks as specimen trees at 12". In the 16" category, they could put red maples. On commercial property, like the county, the City of Beaufort fee would only be on grand trees, and on residential, it would be \$15 additional fee per tree. Ms. Hill said **Libby Anderson** will handle the resolution to council.

### **CREPE MYRTLE REMOVAL**

Ms. Hill said it's been suggested that on Depot Rd, the crepe myrtles on either side should be removed, and Ms. Hill agrees. Some are under power lines and will get pruned by utilities. "The

suppressed ones have to go,” Ms. Hill said. There’s a question of them being taken out or remaining in spite of the symmetry of the streetscape, and a couple are filled with moss and should perhaps be removed or at least sprayed for the moss. If the trees will be whacked in 2-3 more years because of them being under the power lines, Ms. Hill suggested that the Tree Board think about the best solution.

Ms. Hill said trees under power lines could be left and sprayed with copper sulfate or take out the ones under the lines and copper sulfate sprayed on the others. Chairman Farrior said there are four that should go away altogether, and Ms. Hill agreed. Ms. Hill asked the Tree Board to look at these trees for discussion at next meeting.

Chairman Farrior said she votes to take down as few as possible. Ms. Hill said if they take them out, there will be nothing that replaces them.

There was further discussion of the specifics of what might be done to the trees. Mr. Arnett suggested cutting them back, letting them grow out a year, and then using Cambistat on them when they are the size they want them to be. Mr. Waskiewicz said the Cambistat works after 30 days.

Ms. Hill added that the City had removed the Crape Myrtles on the Bay Street / Bluff end of Depot Road and explained the process of public notification.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. Arnett made a motion, second by Mr. Wells to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.