

**MINUTES**  
CITY OF BEAUFORT  
**TREE BOARD**  
July 26, 2012, 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  
Derrick Wells, Vice-Chairman  
Jim Arnett  
William Waskiewicz

**Staff present**

Eliza Hill, Planning Department

Chairman Farris called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

**REVIEW MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2012**

**Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waskiewicz, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.**

**TREE PRUNING PERMITS AND OTHER CHANGES TO THE UDO**

Ms. Hill said that there need to be changes to the UDO in regard to the need for a permit for tree removal or pruning; adherence to ANSI tree standards; mitigation for trees that are removed when they don't need to be; and a Tree Fund.

Mr. Wells said in Port Royal an owner will request a permit for live oaks over 36", the arborist signs off on it, and an inspector will go to look at it. The inspection permit is \$15.

Mr. Arnett said in regard to mitigation, there needs to be a deposit made beforehand to ensure that mitigation is done. The owner won't get the money back if they don't mitigate. Mr. Arnett said the city should have recourse to issue a penalty if the pruning is not done properly. Mr. Waskiewicz said from a commercial standpoint, he doesn't like getting pruning permits; Chairman Farris said she thought that homeowners would also be resistant. Mr. Waskiewicz said having a certified arborist on staff should present an advantage over tree companies that don't have one. He said adherence to ANSI 300 standards can present a downside.

Ms. Hill said if a homeowner prunes and doesn't hire a company, the city will never know about it. She said this idea of a fee for a permit would stay reasonable and would only apply to companies pruning. Mr. Waskiewicz said the standards in Port Royal don't just apply to live

oaks, though. They have a higher price for their permits. There was general agreement that \$10 for pruning permits was fair. Mr. Wells said they won't prune a tree when the owner doesn't have a permit. Mr. Arnett asked the fine if it's done without a permit, and Ms. Hill cited a current example. Ms. Hill said she could advertise or email that an 8" caliper tree now requires a permit for pruning. Mr. Waskiewicz said trees are taken down without permits and asked what they can do then. Ms. Hill said they have to be caught doing it and then they will be fined.

Ms. Hill reviewed 8" and up, suggesting that they don't need inspection ahead of time but then spot-checking after; \$10 permits; and to do as Port Royal does if it's a 36"+ live oak. Mr. Waskiewicz said he doesn't approve of the way Port Royal does it in that they always call the same arborist. Ms. Hill said she's in a position as the administrator in Beaufort to call all three arborists on the Tree Board. Mr. Wells said there's a potential conflict of interest in Port Royal. Mr. Waskiewicz said a problem situation created the way that Port Royal does it, but it's inequitable. Mr. Waskiewicz discussed hiring a consulting arborist who doesn't have a competing tree company. There was some discussion of people who might be able to do this.

Ms. Hill read the section in regard to mitigation. Chairman Farris asked about appeal. Ms. Hill said if she says no on an 18" live oak, and an owner wants to go over her head, they can come to the Tree Board. She said she gets several calls a week to look at trees, and there are situations where some trees need to be taken out but others don't, and she gives them the option of mitigation within 6 months, but then doesn't see the mitigation.

The idea of a deposit was raised again and discussed. If the mitigation isn't done, the money can be kept and goes into the Tree Fund, Mr. Arnett suggested. Mitigation would include a deposit of "x" per tree. Chairman Farris suggested that it be the replacement cost of the number of trees to be replaced. Mr. Arnett said it would be best to do the cost of a tree planting by a professional. Ms. Hill said 2" caliper trees cost about \$100, and Mr. Arnett said for a homeowner it would be more like \$200. Mr. Arnett said a deposit of 3 trees for \$300 seems fairer than 3 trees for \$600. Mr. Wells said \$300 would be enough to motivate the homeowner. Mr. Arnett said if they don't want to plant, the money goes into the Tree Fund, and "that's something of a win-win." There followed discussion of a ceiling and the board decided \$500 was reasonable.

There was general discussion of various hazard trees in Beaufort and what had been done with them as well as what happens when the tree is on DOT land. Mr. Wells raised the "reasonable man clause," which says that if a reasonable man can look at a tree and see that it's a hazard, it must be dealt with. Ms. Hill said she would check that out.

There followed further review of the other elements in the section. Ms. Hill said the "landscape peninsulas" section was important. Trees can't survive in a 6' peninsula, and she suggested bumping it to 12'. Mr. Wells said 12' would be a minimum. Mr. Arnett said rather than planting trees in peninsulas, it would make more sense to "plant 4-6 potentially huge trees" in a green area island rather than planting 20-30 that will never grow in individual small peninsulas. Ms. Hill said they could say create that "whenever possible." The UDO limits the parking spaces, she

said, to prevent giant, unnecessary parking lots. Mr. Wells agreed that a couple of 20' ribbons of trees would provide shade and look attractive. There was a discussion about the merits of the different options.

Ms. Hill decided to table the parking lot matter for now. She raised the idea of the Tree Fund. She needs a letter from the Tree Board to **Scott Dadson** to be put fees, fines, forfeited mitigation deposits, etc. into the Tree Fund. She went on to discuss uses for the Tree Fund. Chairman Farris said grants don't cover the removal of all trees, and Ms. Hill said none on private property are covered. Ms. Hill said almost all public trees can be covered by grant money from the Department of Forestry, but she agreed that not all trees are covered. Chairman Farris said Mr. Dadson may be resistant. Ms. Hill said they need to come up with good ways the money would be used. Chairman Farris suggested public educational programs could use the Tree Fund for supplies. Mr. Wells added maintaining existing trees. Ms. Hill reviewed her notes and included trees purchased for Arbor Day, emergency vehicle clearance, etc.

In regard to a new tree board member, Ms. Hill named some people she had considered reaching out to. Mr. Wells' position is up for reappointment, and he said he agreed that he would renew it.

Ms. Hill detailed the Trees SC Conference in Folly Beach for the board and invited them to attend if they liked.

Chairman Farris asked if there were a minimum number of meetings required of the Tree Board through the year, and Ms. Hill said there's no minimum. She said they used to meet once a quarter, but they accomplished less. August 23 will be the next Tree Board meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business, Mr. Waskiewicz made a motion, second by Mr. Arnett to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 4:39 pm.