I. The Meeting was called to order at 3p.m. by PTAC Chair Barbara Farrior, in attendance was PTAC members Gordon Fritz, Victoria Bergesen, Tamala Conner, Brad Hill, and Parks Supervisor Adam Wellins,

II. Minutes from the November 16th, 2023 meeting was approved.

III. Barbara Farrior opened discussions about the current City Tree Ordinance, Adam Wellins provided the group with a link to the city’s ordinance for the committee to review as well as a link to the State Forestry, where they have resources and other copies of tree ordinances to compare, Adam Wellins stated that a tree ordinance should always be updated every few years to combat and every changing market. Adam Wellins stated the group had brought up concerns and questions about or tree ordinance and how to possibly add to it to make it stronger, Barbara Farrior added that in past meetings there has always been an importance and need to raise the fines of mitigation for tree loss. Adam Wellins told the group that he would find other tree ordinances that match where the city is and will be growing so they can compare how other cities use the mitigation scale. The Committee brought up the possibility of emulating Port Royal’s Tree ordinance and Mitigation Scale because it is stricter and the fines are higher, so Adam Wellins said he would have their ordinance sent over to the group within the next week or two. Brad Hill also brought up the point that mitigation should include the cost of transport and labor and not just the wholesale value of a tree. Victoria Bergesen pointed out that there are suggested plants on the ordinance that are on the Clemson...
exotic and invasive list and should be recommended for removal from the list, but location and cost of removal should be considered before decisions are made to remove them. The group then made a motion to make the recommendation of removal of those plants from the list and it was unanimously approved. The group also said it should be made a priority to take out the vague wording in the ordinance and ensure that there is no grey area for outside entities to work around. The committee is going to get together on February 7th to come up with proposals on how to change the tree ordinance.

IV. Adam Wellins talked the group through the State Forestry Commission packet that lays out a clear path on how a city can develop an urban forestry plan, it talks through many steps and has a score sheet to show where your city already falls within the criteria and what steps you can take to move forward to the next section. Adam Wellins also brought up that the State Forestry Commission wants tree ordinances to clearly state who is responsible for the care and maintenance of all city trees and that the current ordinance does not clearly state that. Victoria Bergesen and Adam Wellins brought up that a great way to start gathering data for an urban forestry plan is through a tree canopy assessment, and the city should consider getting it done, since there is no clear record of it ever being done before, and the only thing the city had done was a tree inventory which helps but was completed in 2008. Adam Wellins said that he would work on gathering the cost of a tree canopy assessment so that it can be taken in front of the City Manager for approval.

V. Adam Wellins gave an update on the Spanish Moss Trail Vegetation Blind, and stated he spoken with his director, Nathan Farrow and he was working with his Stormwater Supervisor Norris Bloodsaw on installing the pipes to fill in the ditch line where the plantings will be installed, the project is slated to be started in February.

VI. New business was opened, and Victoria Bergesen stated that committee’s responsibility is clearly listed, and it is to advise the city on tree fund expenditures, and for two years they have been asking about it and that the city manager told the committee it was out of their purview, and that a tree fund doesn’t exist. Victoria Bergesen also brought up the old city manager had told the committee there was $80,000 dollars put into the tree fund after the development across from the Walmart, and the committee just wants clarification on if there is a tree fund or not. Tamala Connor asked about the project at pigeon point, and Adam Wellins told the group that he has it on schedule to start in the beginning of March, and he has already been working with local vendors on purchasing the plants needed to meet the recommendations from the committee.

VII. Meeting was adjourned.