



**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL**

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

The Land Use and Natural Resources Committee met at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at Town Hall (2056 Middle St.), all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been met. Present were:

Committee members: Ned Higgins (Chair), Carl Hubbard, and Pat O'Neil

Staff: Charles Drayton, Rebecca Fanning, and Pam Otto

- A. Call to Order.** Chair Higgins called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., stating the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law, and all Committee members were present.

Media: None (0)

Public: Eight (8)

B. New Business (Discussion and Action Items)

1. Discussion of invasive plant species removal program (R. Fanning)

Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management Rebecca Fanning summarized the memo that was sent to Town Council from the Tree Commission regarding the Invasive Species Removal Program. It outlined what an invasive plant species is and the purpose and importance of a removal program. She provided examples of non-native, invasive plants in the Lowcountry, specifically the Chinese Tallow, or Popcorn Tree, that has spread rapidly in the interdunal swales of the maritime forest here on the Island. This species and others greatly impair ecological function, specifically for caterpillars and birds.

She then noted the various documents and plans that call for or recommend some kind of invasive species management for the Town, which includes the Comprehensive Plan, the Sea Level Rise and Resilience Plan, and the Accreted Land Management Plan. She reviewed what the Town is currently doing and the most recent suggestions from the Tree Commission's memo. The recommendations are as follows:

- Remove invasives from Town properties.
- Consider text amendments to increase opportunities for invasive plant removal.

- Provide training to residents and volunteers to engage in invasive removal opportunities.

Ms. Fanning then showed maps of Town-owned properties and the various opportunities available for possible invasive species removal. She then took questions from the Committee and the public.

Public Comment:

- Cheryl Clark, 2119 Pettigrew St – asked clarifying questions about the ordinance.
- Susan Middaugh, 2420 Raven St – stated the Town is able to take action now, as the ordinance applies to private property owners only.
- Madeleine McGee– (member of the Tree Commission) stated there is a need to begin volunteer work and workshops with Rebecca now, before it gets too hot.
- Sarah Harper, 1407 Middle St – (runs the SI bird banding station) voiced support for the plan and Rebecca, offered assistance.
- Chauncey Clark, 2119 Pettigrew St – is appreciative of the Town’s efforts and feels the Town should pay for the removal, rather than property owners. Also requested that cedar trees be studied.
- Laura Schroeder, 204 Station 19 – supports the removal of invasive species and volunteer and educational opportunities. Feels the ordinance rules should apply to the Town as well.
- Karen Byko, 2262 Middle St – supports volunteer opportunities and changing the zoning ordinance by adding more invasive species.
- Jeff Polke, 2525 Atlantic Ave – costs are very high to remove these species and suggested the Town look into grant opportunities. Does not feel taxpayers should foot the bill.
- Susan Middaugh, 2420 Raven Dr – supports the plan but feels the removal needs to begin now before the trees start producing seeds in August.

Motion was made by Pat O’Neil, seconded by Carl Hubbard, to advise Council to do two things immediately on this matter; one is ask staff to explore the possibility of grant support for the removal of the most aggressive non-native invasives that are in the protected land, and secondly, that we ask our attorney to meet with Rebecca and Charles and review the ordinance and the deed restrictions to see if currently, without changing the ordinance, we are able to do more invasive removal that we’re currently doing, passed unanimously.

2. **Discussion of property use agreement for the collection of dune restoration plant material in the RC-1 (R. Fanning)**

Ms. Fanning stated a local plant nursey, Charleston Aquatic, specializes in restoration plant growing and reached out to the Town. They have historically collected material from Folly Beach, but would like to expand. They have requested to collect cuttings of bitter panicgrass from the maritime forest. There are strict protocols put in place by the Forestry Commission and other entities to ensure there is no damage or impact to the areas being cut. The propagations would then be sold to anyone doing a dune restoration project. She then took questions from the Committee. Mr. O'Neil asked if we should consult with attorneys.

- Karen Byko, 2262 Middle St – concerned about unintended consequences and feels we should consult with Town attorneys before giving approval.

Motion was made by Pat O'Neil, seconded by Carl Hubbard, to take this question to the Town attorney for his opinion, passed unanimously.

C. Old Business (Staff update available; Discussion/Action not required)

1. Update of Palmetto Planting Plan (R. Fanning)

The funding has been applied for and the Coastal Community is setting up the fund. The Tree Commission has been charged with negotiating planting details but have to wait until the funds come through.

2. Update of Town Tree Replacement Guidebook (R. Fanning)

The guidebook is complete, with partial funding from the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Printed copies will be printed and distributed. It details the benefits of tree planting and offers suggestions of what to plant when trees have to be removed for construction, etc.

3. Update on Planning Commission and Ordinance workshop session (C. Drayton)

The next Planning Commission workshop session will be on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. They will be discussing recommendations regarding erosion control structures and landscaping around lift stations.

Chair Higgins wanted to go back to one point brought up by residents at the meeting and that was the idea of moving forward with a plan for dealing with invasive species removal immediately.

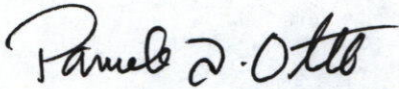
Motion was made by Pat O'Neil, seconded by Carl Hubbard, to recommend to Town Council that Fanning start work on removing non-native invasive plant species at Battery Thompson, passed unanimously.

D. Public Comment

E. Adjourn

Motion was made to adjourn at 2:23 p.m. by Pat O'Neil, seconded by Carl Hubbard, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela Otto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Otto

Approved at the April 21, 2026 Town Council regular meeting.