

TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND TREE COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES January 25, 2021

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Tree Commission was held on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. online via Zoom. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been satisfied. Present were Commission members Mary English, Donovan Glassburn, Milton Langley, Caroline Pennington and Nathaniel H. Robb.

Members of the public present: Kate Campbell and Beau Clowney.

Staff members present: Joe Henderson, Director of Planning/Zoning Administrator and Jessica Gress, Licensing and Permit Technician.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Robb called the meeting to order and stated that the press and public were duly notified pursuant to State Law and a quorum of Commission Members were present. There were no known members of media present.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Glassburn made a motion to approve the December 28, 2020 Tree Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Langley seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:**

2062 Pettigrew Street: Applicant requested approval to remove one (1) Category 1 live oak at 19" diameter at breast height (DBH) with attached mitigation plan. Request was in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 21-162. B. (Application for relocation, or removal and replacement) (TMS# 529-09-00-055).

Mr. Henderson asked the Commission Members that while reviewing the applications to be mindful of the tree removal criteria which is size, species, location, density and mitigation plan. Mr. Henderson stated that the applicant requested permission to remove the 18-inch live oak that is located on the back of the lot. Mr. Henderson stated during the December 2020 meeting, the Commission approved the removal of the pecan tree but denied the removal of the live oak which is within the buildable area of the proposed renovation.

Mr. James Quarles, applicant presented his application to the Commission Members. Mr. Quarles informed the Commission that the home is a historic sea cabin and this home needs a lot of work. Mr. Quarles stated that the foundation will be redone and the home will be relocated. Mr. Quarles informed the Commission members that there is a major flooding problem that will need to be addressed as well. Mr. Quarles stated that the proposed

renovation will relocate the home to the other side of the lot. Mr. Quarles stated that at the last meeting the Commission suggested moving the structure further back on the lot which was done however the home is still within the drip line and the foundation of the steps will still be in the root space of the tree.

Mr. Quarles stated that they do their best to try and preserve all trees on the lots when doing any kind of construction but due to the location and size of this tree it would just be damaged by the renovation project and the foundation work needed to accommodate the home. Mr. Quarles stated that fill will need to be brought in to be placed on the lot. Bringing in fill around a large tree also triggers issues for the tree to survive.

Ms. Kate Campbell stated that they are limited to the amount of fill that is allowed on the lot but also, they have to control the drainage for the property and the drainage that comes onto the property. Ms. Campbell stated that in past projects they have had to create like a retention area that has water loving plants that can accommodate the drainage plan. This house is the bowl in this area so all the water comes into this yard. Ms. Campbell stated that she is concerned for the wellbeing of the tree due to the relocation of the existing structure and the amount of fill that will need to be placed on the lot. Ms. Campbell stated that they would rather go ahead and remove the tree and either replant or pay into the tree fund.

Mr. Beau Clowney stated that if the tree was smaller, they could just pick up and move it. Mr. Clowney stated that part of the reason why this tree has survived for so long is because it is literally sitting in a bowl of water, figuratively speaking. Mr. Clowney feels as though this tree will not be easily moved so the best plan would be to go ahead and remove it. With the renovation, the fill and foundation from the porch will potentially cause major damage to this tree.

Ms. English stated that she has sympathy in regards to the flooding and completely understands why fill will need to be brought in to help with this situation. Ms. English stated that it comes down to the canopy of the tree. There is a needed canopy and with the removal of this tree something will need to be planted to replace the absorption from this tree. Ms. English stated she is ok with the removal of the tree but wants to see heavy mitigation in place of this removal.

Mr. Robb asked if you add fill doesn't it put the water somewhere else. Mr. Campbell responded by saying they will have to have areas that are matching the grade to the north and then there will be areas of retention where they don't add fill. Ms. Campbell stated that they won't be able to fill the whole lot but they will need to make extreme adjustments to address the flooding. Mr. Clowney stated that all plans will be conducted by an engineer.

Mr. Robb asked if there will be a foundation under the front porch. Mr. Quarles responded saying that there will be foundation and pilings under the porch. Mr. Robb asked if they cut that much of the root for the foundation how injurious will that be to the life expectancy of this tree. Mr. Henderson responded by saying based on the plans submitted they wouldn't be able

to proceed. If the foundation is placed where the site plan shows it will interfere with the critical root zone of this tree which will eventually kill it. Mr. Henderson stated that the stairs will need to be relocated which may affect their Design Review Board approval. Mr. Henderson stated that as the applicant stated they will be bringing in a huge amount of fill which is going to affect the tree alone.

Mr. Glassburn asked if the three trees shown on the mitigation plan will still be the trees planted. Mr. Quarles responded by stating that in the area where the proposed mitigation trees were to be planted there are power lines in that overhead. Due to the power lines, the proposed mitigation would not work because it would be hazardous to the tree and cause issues for the power lines. Mr. Quarles stated that at this time they requested to just pay into the tree fund. There will be replanting but with all the current issues, the replanting plan is still unknown.

Mr. Langley asked if the tree on Atlantic side by the driveway would stay. Mr. Henderson responded by stating that it will be removed and paying the full mitigation to the tree fund. This tree will be removed due to the power lines being in the way.

Ms. Pennington stated that her first thought was to move the tree but now knowing about the power lines the tree should be removed with a mitigation plan. Ms. Pennington believes that just paying into the tree fund doesn't do justice. Mr. Glassburn agreed with Ms. Pennington.

Mr. Glassburn suggested donating 1/3 paying into the tree fund and then making the applicant replant the difference.

Mr. Robb asked if the structure moved back a foot what would happen. Mr. Quarles stated that the home cannot move any further back because they would be in violation of the zoning standards. Ms. Campbell stated that if nothing was done to the actual home, fill would still need to be brought in which either way it will hurt the tree.

Mr. Robb stated he was against the removal of this tree until the fill issue came to his attention. He believed there were other options to save the tree. Mr. Robb stated that it seems that the Commission members are in favor to approve with the question of mitigation and paying to the tree fund.

Mr. Glassburn made a motion to approve the removal of the Category 1 live oak tree provided that the applicant replant 33 inches. Mr. Langley seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

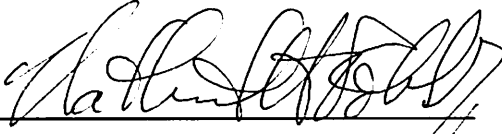
1321 Middle Street: Applicant requested approval to remove one (1) Category 1 like pecan tree at 24" diameter in breast height (DBH) with attached mitigation plan. Request was in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 21-162. B. (Application for relocation, or removal and replacement) (TMS# 523-06-00-034)

Mr. Henderson informed the Commission Members that the applicant was not present. Mr. Henderson stated that the application presented is the removal of a Category 1 pecan tree. Mr. Henderson recommended the removal of this tree because it is in severe decline. There are obvious signs that eventually it will die if it hasn't already.

The Commission Members were in favor of the removal of the pecan tree due to the severe decline of the tree.

Mr. Langley made a motion to remove the Category 1 pecan tree. Mr. Robb seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. **ADJOURN: Mr. Robb made a motion to adjourn at 5:42pm. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**



Nathaniel H. Robb, Chairman



Date