

TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND TREE COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES March 29, 2021

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Tree Commission was held on Monday, March 29, 2021 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, Caroline Pennington and Nathaniel H. Robb.

Members of the public present: Christopher Riley, owner of 2320 Goldbug Avenue, Jodi Furman and Council Member Chauncey Clark

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. Robb suggested that the January 2021 Tree Commission Meeting Minutes should refrain from approval because not all Commission Members were able to review the minutes before this meeting.
- III. **TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:**

2320 Goldbug Avenue: Applicant and owners requested approval to remove two (2) Category 1 pine trees of 18" and 22" in diameter at breast height (DBH) with attached mitigation plan. The request was in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 21-162 B. (Application for relocation, or removal and replacement) (TMS# 529-06-00-072)

Mr. Henderson stated that this property is located at the corner of Station 24 and Goldbug Avenue. Mr. Henderson stated that the property owner is proposing to build a new single-family home on the property which requires the removal of two pine trees that are 18" and 22" inches in diameter. Mr. Henderson stated that the applicant submitted a mitigation plan with a 100% mitigation with the full 40 inches and adding an additional 5 inches. Mr. Henderson stated that the applicant proposed to replant five 5-inch live oaks, four 5-inch magnolias and three palmettos. Mr. Henderson asked the Commission members to be mindful of the tree removal criteria when approving requests, which are considerations to size, species, location, density of existing trees and the applicant's mitigation plan.

Mr. Aaron Ede, applicant, stated that he wanted to make note that on the rear of the property there is a 43-inch oak tree and Mr. Henderson worked closely with him to accommodate the oak tree. Mr. Ede stated that because of the location of the oak, it required that the new home be pushed towards the front of the lot so the tree wouldn't be in the buildable area. Mr. Ede stated that even with the house more so in the front of the lot, the pine trees proposed to be removed will be very close to if not on top of the buildable area. Mr. Ede pointed out that during a major hurricane pine trees can be very dangerous when they are really close to a home. Because the trees are too close to the buildable area, Mr. Ede asked for permission to remove the pines and replant at full mitigation.

Mr. Christopher Riley, property owner of 2320 Goldbug Avenue, stated that the main goal is to add more trees after the construction is complete. Mr. Riley stated that the lot is fairly wooded at this point and he would like to keep it that way after the home is built.

No public comment was made.

Mr. Robb stated that the live oak on this lot is incredible and that he is more than willing to approve the removal of the two pine trees with what is proposed for replacement. Ms. Pennington stated that she agreed with Mr. Robb and that the mitigation plan is very generous. Ms. English stated that it seems there was a lot of thought that went into the planning of the mitigation and is in favor of the removal of the pine trees.

Mr. Robb made a motion to approve the removal of the two pine trees with 100% mitigation to be completed after construction. Ms. English seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1: Consideration to modify tree removal requirements for Category 1 pine, gum and river birch.

Mr. Robb stated that he and Mr. Henderson recently had a conversation about possibly making a modification to the tree removal requirements by allowing staff to review and approve the removals of pine, gum and river birch trees with full mitigation proposed. Ms. English believes this is a wonderful idea. Ms. English stated that she learned that native pines should really be in stands or groupings of trees to be safe from failure and falling in high winds.

Mr. Henderson stated that Ms. English is correct that the pines can be dangerous if they are standalone mature pines. Mr. Henderson stated that the soil on Sullivan's Island is more on the sandy side there is less clay to really hold the root system of a pine tree. The pines are usually top heavy and are more prone to snap. Mr. Henderson stated that Town Staff is approached by citizens on a regular basis to remove either pine, gum or river birch trees and either pay and fee to mitigate or replant onsite one inch for one inch. Mr. Henderson requested that the Commission consider allowing staff-level approval for a Category 1 pine, gum or river birch if

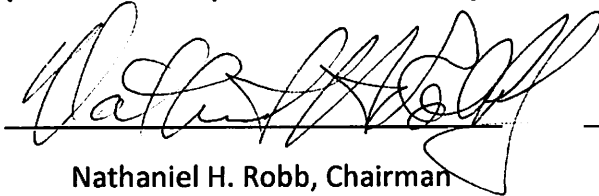
the applicant presented a replacement with one of the more appropriate replacement trees without the need for Tree Commission application, review and approval prior to permitting.

Ms. Pennington stated that she agrees with this idea and it will be a good use of Town Staff time because it would expedite customer service for our citizens. Ms. Pennington asked what category a Myrtle tree falls into. Mr. Henderson responded by stating that typically they are considered shrubs if less than 6 inches in diameter, however, once it is over 6 inches in diameter it becomes a tree.

Mr. Henderson clarified that if someone wants to remove a Category 1 tree but does not want to pay mitigation fees or mitigate by replanting, this scenario would trigger a Tree Commission application and review. Mr. Henderson stated that unless the applicant presents 100% payment or 100% mitigation for the Category 1 pine, gum or river birch trees, they would still be required to apply to the Tree Commission.

Ms. English made a motion to allow Town Staff to review and approve the removal of pine, gum and river birch trees when providing 100% payment into the tree fund or 100% mitigation. Ms. Pennington seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURN: Mr. Robb made a motion to adjourn at 5:20 pm. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.


Nathaniel H. Robb, Chairman


Date