

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND  
TREE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 22, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Tree Commission was held at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been satisfied. Present were Commission members Donovan Glassburn, Madeliene McGee, and Milton Langley. Derek Wade.

Members of the public present: Ms. Dolly Droze, property owner at 2402 Quarter Street, Mr. Randy Wilgis, property owner at 2202 I' On Avenue, Mr. Jeff Valko, property owner at 2114 I' On Avenue, Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Builders.

Members of Council: Mayor Pat O'Neil.

Staff members present: Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Jessi Gress, Licensing and Permit Technician. Rebecca Fanning, Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Langley 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 THE MINUTES FROM March 25, 2024:** Mr. Wade made a motion to approve the March 25, 2024 Tree Commission Meeting minutes. Mr. Glassburn seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:**

**2118 I 'On Avenue:** Dane Derbyshire, of D4 Partners, requests removal of a healthy, Category 1 oak tree of 21" in diameter at breast height (DBH). This request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement) (PIN #529-09-00-022).

Mr. Drayton stated that this is a healthy oak tree, and it poses no substantial hazards. The applicant is expressing the desire to remove the tree to allow space for vehicular access, circulation, and storage in a proposed short term auto parking lot. Staff recommends that the Commission grant approval for the removal of this tree if they approve of the proposed combination of mitigation plantings and payment into the tree fund, given that the tree encumbers the buildable area on the lot.

Mr. Derbyshire presented his application to the Board.

**A letter was submitted to Town staff regarding this application in favor of the proposed removal (Exhibit 1).**

Ms. Dolly Droze, property owner at 2402 Quarter Street, was in favor of the application presented.

Mr. Randy Wilgis, property owner at 2202 I' On Avenue, was in favor of the application presented.

Mr. Jeff Valko, property owner at 2114 I' On Avenue was in favor of the application presented.

Mr. Wade asked the applicant if they had attempted different plan layouts to allow this tree to stay. Mr. Cline responded by stating that they do not have any official options but have done some research and felt that an alternative plan would still require the removal of this tree.

**Mr. Glassburn made a motion to grant approval of the applicant presentation based on staff recommendations. Ms. McGee seconded this motion. Motion failed 2 to 2. Mr. Langley and Mr. Wade opposed.**

Mr. Wade suggested replacing the red oaks on the planting plan with live oaks and possibly removing one of the parking spots in the rear of the lot to allow a live oak to be planted to create more privacy from the residential home.

Mr. Derbyshire suggested withdrawing his application for further study if the Commission members are suggesting removing another parking spot.

Mr. Glassburn suggested replacing the red oaks with live oaks and placing a live oak on the residential side of the property to allow for the requested privacy and to avoid any parking spots from being lost.

**Ms. McGee made a motion to grant approval of the tree removal provided the consideration of plant species and locations, to support privacy, to be approved by staff. Mr. Glassburn seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**

**1743 Atlantic Avenue:** Gerald J. Benoit, representing Atlantic Ave Holdings, LLC, requests to remove a healthy, multi-stemmed, Category 1, live oak with 23", 21", and 21" leaders at DBH. This request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement) (PIN #523-12-00-021).

Mr. Drayton stated that this is a healthy and outstanding example of a live oak tree, and it poses no substantial hazards. The applicant is expressing the desire to remove the tree to allow space for a new home to be sited. Staff recommends that the Commission defer action on the tree removal and instruct the applicant to explore alternative site plans for the lot that would enable the tree to remain, possibly seeking setback relief through the BZA, and at the same time explore the potential to move the tree from the middle of the lot into the rear setback.

Mr. Benoit presented his application to the Board.

Mr. Wade suggested that the property owner consider building a home around the tree so it doesn't have to be removed.

Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Builders, stated that as a builder on the island, this is one of the smallest sites he has had to construct a home on and informed the Commission members that due to the small lot size its nearly impossible to build a residential home around this tree which is why it needs to be removed. Mr. Rhodes suggested that the application be withdrawn and requested that the Commission members have an on-site visit to see the importance of the removal of the tree.

**Mr. Rhodes withdrew the application from the agenda.**

**2814 Brooks Street:** Lucas Morrison, homeowner, requests the removal of three (3) hazardous, Category 1, live oak trees (35", 23"/15"/20", & 34") and one (1) healthy, Category 1 water oak. This request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement) (PIN #529-07-00-046).

Mr. Drayton stated that this is a large lot with canopy covering over ¾ of the property. The applicant has proposed a significant removal plan to accommodate the DRB-approved addition. Staff finds the trees proposed for removal are healthy and requests mitigation for their removals. The three trees (#1, #2, and 14 in pine) in the NW corner of the lot (by the proposed garage) may not need to be removed to accommodate the project and if they can remain by moving the garage over a few feet, staff believes they should b maintained on the property.


Mr. Morrison presented his application to the Board.

**No public comment was made.**

Ms. McGee suggested that due to the lack of time, the Commission defer the application for further consideration. Mr. Morrison asked that the Commission members consider taking staff recommendations on the approvals.

Mr. Wade made a motion to grant approval of the removals based on staff recommendations. Ms. McGee seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. ADJOURN: Mr. Glassburn made a motion to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. Ms. McGee seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**



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5/28/24

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Mark Miller, Chairman

Date

Dear members of the Sullivans Island Tree Commission,

4/10/2023

I support the removal of the trees in question to facilitate the construction of the proposed parking lot. The situation is easily mitigated and a functional parking lot is a real benefit to the residents of Sullivans Island. I think some who oppose the parking lot are simply against any commercial use on the lot and hope the Tree Commission will influence the outcome. With that in mind please consider the following comments.

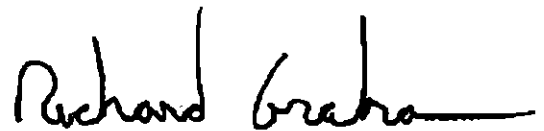
The commercial portion of 2118 Ion has a long history of commercial use. It's had several commercial uses over the years before Hurricane Hugo destroyed the building located there. It was even an unimproved parking lot for Station 22 restaurant at one time.

Battery Thomson is being used for parking but the Town didn't get DRB approval as required in Section 21-97. It's also zoned residential and the battery is on the National Historic Register. The parking is in complete violation of town ordinances and doesn't comply with the comprehensive plan either. The lot is the source of most of the pedestrians on station 22 and is a constant source of extra traffic on Ion and Atlantic. A parking lot at 2118 Ion will reduce those concerns and the Town should not rely on an illegal parking lot to provide parking.

I live right next to the existing gravel parking lot on Station 21. It doesn't cause me any issues worth worrying about. An occasional over use of a key fob is about as bad as it gets. With the extensive landscaping around the new lot I doubt the people expressing concerns will even notice it after a couple of weeks. The illegal parking at Battery Thomson causes me the most irritation as drivers leave and use Ion as a commercial district bypass in the evening hours.

The design is good, the landscaping is excellent, and it needs to be profitable to be a long term benefit. Continuing to force drivers into residential areas looking for parking is the problem and lots like 2118 Ion are the solution. A couple of trees should not stand in the way.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Graham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Richard Graham  
2102 Ion Ave.