

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND  
TREE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
August 26, 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 Derek Wade, Donovan Glassburn, Madeleine McGee, Mark Miller and Milton Langley.

Members of the public present: Mr. Drew Underhill project manager with Urban Forestry Works, Mr. Jeff McKee, employer of Urban Forestry, and Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Builders.

Members of Council: No members of Council were present.

Staff members present: Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning, Jessi Gress, Licensing and Permit Technician, and Rebecca Fanning, Director of Resilience & 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 July 22, 2024:** Mr. Langley made a motion to grant approval of the July 22, 2024 Tree Commission Meeting Minutes as presented. Mr. Glassburn seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:**

**1735 & 1743 Atlantic Avenue:** Dane Derbyshire, representative of Atlantic Ave Holdings, LLC, requested to move a healthy, multi-stemmed, Category 1, live oak with 23", 21", and 21" leaders at DBH from this property to an adjacent property. This request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement) (PIN #523-12-00-020 & -021, respectively).

Mr. Drayton stated that this is a healthy live oak tree, and it poses no substantial hazards. The applicant wishes to move the tree to an adjacent lot with enough land to accommodate the tree so that it remains a beautiful and productive specimen in the same area, maintaining its natural stormwater benefits, and to allow space for a new home to be sited where the tree is currently located. Mr. Drayton stated that Rebecca Fanning, Town Natural Resource Director, and Commissioner Derek Wade, met on site to determine the removal of limbs to allow room in the buildable area to save the tree. Mr. Drayton stated that himself and Town Administrator, Joe Henderson, reviewed the proposed cuts and determined that would be a very damaging level of pruning of the tree and would dramatically change the

shape of the large tree. After exploring all options, it was deemed necessary to remove the tree from 1743 Atlantic Avenue and place it on the adjacent property, 1735 Atlantic Avenue, to allow buildable area on the lot. Mr. Drayton stated that the property owner has hired Urban Forestry Works to come in remove and relocate the tree safely to allow the tree to flourish and for the property owner to build a home on 1743 Atlantic Avenue.

Staff recommends that the Commission grant approval for the tree to be moved to a location on the adjacent lot in a location that is determined to be clear of existing and future conflicts with infrastructure and construction, and additionally, that the applicant provide mitigation bonding in the full amount for per inch replacement and agree if the tree dies within 2 years of the transplant or the conclusion of the contractor's obligation with the applicant, whichever is longer, the tree will be replaced with no less than (2) 10-inch live oaks.

Ms. McGee asked where the Dominion Energy lines were located. Mr. Drayton stated that they are currently located outside of the property line in the DOT right-of-way. They are typically not shown on the proposed survey. Ms. McGee asked if going forward if they can be shown on the survey so the Commission can insure that they aren't in the way of a relocation or a replant of a tree. Mr. Wade suggested pushing the proposed tree location a little further back to avoid contact with the power lines.

Ms. McGee stated she understands that Staff is recommending bonding but asked what staff would recommend in terms of canopy coverage on the lot from in which the tree is being removed. Is there anything the Commission members could do to replace canopy on 1743 Atlantic Avenue. Mr. Drayton responded by stating that the Tree Commission could put into place any kind of conditions they wish to. Ms. McGee responded by stating that the proposed replanting plan shows three trees to be replanted but looks like one of those trees is already existing under the power lines. Mr. Drayton stated that the proposed replanting plan shows three trees to be planted on the rear of the property line not the front which wont be in the path of the power lines. Ms. McGee stated that the Commission could ask for additional canopy development as part of the development. Mr. Drayton confirmed.

Ms. McGee asked if the current tree is only 25% of the existing canopy. Mr. Drayton stated it's 25% of the existing lot. Ms. McGee asked what the percentage of the existing canopy is. Mr. Drayton responded by stating roughly 50% of the existing canopy. Ms. McGee asked if they would replant that much coverage. Mr. Glassburn responded by stating that they wouldn't need that much canopy when building a new home. Ms. McGee stated that she would like to see more mitigation added to add more canopy to the lot. Mr. Glassburn stated that they have additional trees to be planted on the rear of the lot which would add additional canopy. Mr. Drayton stated that he could imagine that the property owner would want to create some sort of buffering between the two homes.

Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Builders, stated that as of last week 2 12-foot magnolias and 6 18 feet cedar trees have been placed on the rear of the lot. Mr. Dane

Derbyshire, property owner, stated that they are trying to create some sort of buffer in between the two lots.

Mr. Langley asked what the relation between the trees that is were just planted to the trees was shown as the proposed mitigation. Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Construction, stated that the new trees are what's shown on the proposed site plan but they chose to use magnolias instead of live oaks and red cedars. These trees are on 1743 Atlantic Avenue. Mr. Miller stated that the blue dots on the proposed survey are not what's being proposed but what has already been planted. Mr. Derbyshire stated that the original plan was to remove the tree and plant on the rear of the property. Since then, they are now requesting to move the tree to another lot but chose to go ahead and plant the trees on the rear lot for overall beautification and privacy between homes. Ms. McGee asked if the same company will be used. Mr. Derbyshire responded by stating yes, Urban Forestry Works will be doing the work. Mr. Miller asked if Urban Forestry Works would provide a presentation.

Mr. Drew Underhill, property manager with Urban Forestry Works, stated that they are based out of central Florida. They do a lot of work in the area and do a lot of installation projects on Sullivan's Island. Mr. Underhill stated that they have a farm about an hour northwest of Sullivan's Island in Ehrhardt, South Carolina which has a lot of large live oaks, cypress and crepe myrtles, etc. that is native to South Carolina. Mr. Underhill stated that they have a partitioned system that they use to remove and relocate large trees. Mr. Underhill stated that the same system is used to remove trees from their farms for purchase and replanting and its also used for onsite relocations. Mr. Underhill stated that this system has been used to replant trees in Charleston, Isle of Palms, and Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Underhill stated that this will be the first onsite relocation on Sullivan's Island.

Mr. Drayton guided Mr. Underhill through his presentation. Mr. Underhill stated that our patented system is called LTTS which is short for Large Tree Transplanting System. Mr. Underhill, project manager with Urban Forestry Works, provided the Commission with the step-by-step process to remove and relocate the tree requested which are as follows:

1. Assess the tree to determine if its in good health for relocation. The tree located on 1743 Atlantic Avenue is healthy and able to survive relocation.
2. Tree is selected: The selected tree is root pruned in the ground on each side over several months prior to moving. The under brushed site is fenced and irrigated in preparation of the move.
3. Tree is boxed: the tree is boxed with our system which prevents any damage to the truck and canopy. Once secure in our box it can travel on site using our equipment.
4. Tree is loaded: once the tree is boxed and the canopy strategically tired the trees are ready to be moved by loader or by truck and trailer. The LTTS system protects the root system during transport, ensuring the best result.

5. Tree is set: the tree is off loaded by crane or loader. The strategic lift points on the LTTs simplify the handling of the tree while protecting the integrity of the tree. Our system allows the tree to be handled by an array of equipment.
6. Tree is planted: once the tree is placed in the excavation the box is disassembled and removed. Our system allows the tree to be lifted by crane or skidded into the perfect spot. The tree is ready to take off!

Mr. Glassburn asked how long the process takes. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that the root pruning process is what takes the longest and if approved, the removal and relocation will take roughly 6 to 8 months. Once the tree is completely root pruned and they come to do the actual box and move of the tree, it takes about two days.

Mr. Glassburn asked what the success rate is. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that out of 275 trees 2 trees have been lost. In those two cases it was due to the loss of power, not enough staff to watch over the tree relocation process and the tree didn't receive enough water due to the loss of power which caused the tree to go into shock. Mr. Underhill stated that by the time they were able to get on site and assess the issue, it was too late. Mr. Underhill stated that since then, they have systems in place to keep these situations from happening. For example, if there was an occurrence, notifications will be sent to the office and to staff's phones, so they are able to respond in a timely manner.

Mr. Miller stated that the hole will be dug in the current driveway location at 1735 Atlantic but wondered if there is any sort of water line or anything buried under the asphalt that they are not aware of. Mr. Drayton responded by stating that based on the survey that has been completed there is relative confidence that there is nothing under the driveway. Mr. Drayton stated that there could be some drain lines under the driveway from the building that need to be repositioned but other than that they don't think there's anything there. Mr. Miller stated in thinking in advanced, if there is something there that cannot be moved, has there been any thought or process on a plan B. Mr. Derbyshire stated that as of right now there's no official plan for that but before the tree is moved, they will make sure there's nothing underground and the tree can be planted.

Ms. McGee asked if the property was still on the market for sale. Mr. Derbyshire responded by stating yes, 1735 Atlantic Avenue, is currently for sale. Mr. Wade asked how much of the asphalt driveway on will be removed. Mr. Derbyshire responded that at this time that is to be determined. Depending on what the potential new owner wants or if it stays with Mr. Derbyshire, he could see that almost all of it will be removed as it's not really innkeeping with the aesthetics of the home. Mr. Wade asked from a horticultural standpoint how much of the asphalt should go away. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that for the health of the tree it would need to be roughly 25 by 30 to 20 by 30-foot removal of asphalt for the tree implementation. Mr. Derbyshire stated that in terms of the tree and this process it will be their decision to refer to the experts throughout this process to make sure it's a successful move. Mr. Derbyshire stated that this is already a couple of months project,

and he feels confident in Urban Forestry Works will successfully complete this project with the outcome of a healthy tree.

Ms. McGee stated that she made some calls and Urban Forestry Works does have a very good reputation. Mr. Miller stated that he has been involved in the transfer of a 108-inch live oak tree in Louisiana so he knows it can be done but doesn't assume this is a piece of cake even with a good track record. Mr. Miller stated that this will be the most important tree relocation on Sullivan's Island.

Ms. McGee stated that the experience she had with the parking lot installation and the trees that were planted on this lot that did not survive...Mr. Derbyshire interjected by stating that he agrees but this was a process of them trying to do exactly what they said they would do right away instead of taking the time needed to complete the process, so the trees do survive. Mr. Derbyshire stated that moving trees in in the middle of August was not a smart idea and decided to wait until October when the trees could survive. The intention was not to kill any trees but to follow through what was said by him in the meetings ensuring that the process was completed based on the plans. Mr. Glassburn stated that he had just renovated an office building and put trees in and they all died, so he understood what Mr. Derbyshire went through with the parking lot. Mr. Derbyshire stated that its also very important to do this process during the right time of year not in the middle of summer. Ms. McGee stated that the trees at the parking lot sat out of the ground for four or five days over a holiday weekend which is why they died. Mr. Glassburn stated that he saw people out there watering them. Mr. Derbyshire stated that they weren't happy with the trees not being successful either. Ms. McGee stated that the reputation of Urban Forestry Works is what they are counting on not the experience with the property owner.

Mr. Wade had a question regarding the trees that the Commission members were told to go look at as reference points in the previous meeting, which was he went and looked at all three trees on Isle of Palms and wondered how long those have been planted in the ground. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that it depends. Mr. Wade stated the tree on 29<sup>th</sup> Street, which was roughly March of 2022, when do the straps and the ties come off. Mr. Underhill stated that those were put on at the builders' request because they wouldn't normally put anything on the tree that would be binding on the branch structure, however there were some storms coming in so they came out to add additional straps and anchors for this reason. Mr. Wade stated that the tree on Cameron Road is a multi-trunk tree which looks like it's the most comparable to this plan which also has tie downs on it. Mr. Underhill stated that this tree was moved before the one on 29<sup>th</sup> Street and the way the trees are anchored are thought he root ball. Mr. Underhill stated that during the root pruning process it's so slow and the root ball is very tight and very strong, so they anchor the tree by the root ball very similar to mobile home anchors which are used to tie down a mobile home in the event of a storm. Right outside of the root ball they anchor them down. Mr. Wade asked how long it takes for those trees to reestablish a rootzone that would

make them stable. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that it takes about 4 to 5 years for it to start taking into its new home. Mr. Wade stated that the tree on Edgewater Alley seems to be the worst case out of the three. Mr. Underhill stated that the tree took a major hacking after the tree was moved in order for the home to be built and the canopy was reduced to the least amount of canopy allowed by the City of Isle of Palms, which he believes is roughly 40%. Mr. Underhill stated that while they were doing the thinning of the tree they also cut the water supply off to the tree by accident. Mr. Underhill stated that because it went a period without water, he got an Arborist from Natural Directions and had them doing check-ups on the tree twice a week. Once we had someone in house keeping eyes on it, the tree picked right back up. Mr. Wade asked about the trees at MUSC. Mr. Underhill stated that they currently have moved three trees at MUSC but there's one more that has quite a bit of construction going on around it that is also going to be moved. Mr. Underhill stated that those trees were moved in January of 2024. Mr. Wade stated that the tree on Edgewater seems to be the largest of the group and it doesn't look very good for whatever reason and hopes that they wouldn't have a repeat of that tree with this one on Atlantic. Mr. Underhill agreed and stated that the tree on Edgewater was probably in the trickiest situations he's ever encountered. Mr. Underhill stated that it was on a dune that was about 15 feet high off sea level. Mr. Underhill stated that getting that tree in its final destination was also a process but assured that the tree on Atlantic wont have a similar outcome to the Edgewater tree.

Ms. McGee asked if they subcontract out the supervision of the tree. Mr. Underhill stated that once the tree is moved and in its new location, they go down to quarterly checkups. When this Edgewater tree was moved and his staff going to quarterly check ups is when the water issued occurred, but they were able to catch it about a week and a half after the water supply was lost.

Mr. Glassburn stated that it doesn't really look like it was a very healthy tree in the first place. Mr. Underhill stated that he proposed to the builder to get several arborists to come and look at it because there were multiple hollow points in the tree and it was just rotten to the core. Mr. Underhill stated that he had three different arborists come and look at it.

Mr. Wade asked Mr. Underhill if he has any trees that are 5-6 years down the road of this process for the Commission to look at because all the trees he's seen it seems like at least 1/3 of the trees are gone and they are thin up top which is expected after being moved. Mr. Wade also asked if he believed this tree on Atlantic would end up the same way. Mr. Underhill stated that these trees didn't have the right amount of rootpruning and were pushed aggressively in order for the relocation to be completed. Mr. Underhill stated that the average amount of time for the root pruning to be done should be about 6 to 8 months, which in these cases it was roughly 5 to 6 months of root pruning. Mr. Underhill stated that 5-6 years ago they were still working out in plantations not so much into Charleston or Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Miller stated that basically there's no good tree around for an example. Mr.

Underhill confirmed but stated that they have had great success with all their work.

Ms. McGee asked if these trees were root pruned too fast. Mr. Underhill confirmed and stated that the City of Isle of Palms approved this time frame the builder had requested. Ms. McGee stated that she's trusting Mr. Underhill more than the property owner due to the past experience with him and would think that if something happened during this process that wasn't up to Mr. Underhill's standards, he would push back on it. Mr. Underhill stated that he knew it would be a successful move but with the lack of water and the trimming after the fact was the concerns for the growth of this tree.

Mr. Wade stated that if he's understanding correctly, they need 2 to 4 months per quadrant for pruning the roots. Mr. Underhill confirmed that it is between 2 to 3 months of root pruning cuts. Mr. Wade stated that if we want to maximize our opportunity for a successful transplant, it should be 3 months per side. Mr. Underhill confirmed. Mr. Wade stated that with four sides, they are a year away from moving the tree but he heard someone say earlier you plan to move the tree in January which is not giving 3 months per side. Mr. Underhill stated that they try to move the tree in dormancy. Mr. Wade responded stating that if we are going to be really successful with this they need as much time for this root zone to stabilize which is 3 months which now brings you into August but you may want to wait till it cools off which could bring them to October of 2025. Mr. Derbyshire stated that we all need to stay grounded and talk about what is necessary not the what ifs of 10 years etc. lets talk about base case. Mr. Wade responded by stating that he just wants to understand. Mr. Derbyshire wanted to clarify by asking Mr. Underhill if the Edgewater tree will survive. Mr. Underhill confirmed that it will survive. Mr. Derbyshire clarified that he feels the Commission members wrote this tree off but the tree is going to live with the relocation of 3 to 5 months and they are building a new home right on top of it. Mr. Underhill would not consider the Edgewater tree a grade A tree from the beginning as it had hollow points through the tree and almost petrified wood at the top when they agreed to move it.

Mr. Wade stated that they are all sitting in this meeting because they think it's a beautiful tree in a beautiful setting on a beautiful island and as the Tree Commission our job is to try and hold on to some of these trees. Mr. Wade stated he's just listening to the applicant tell him that he needs 3 months, 2 at least, so roughly 8 months but the longer you allow the root zone to develop the better off the tree will be. Mr. Wade stated if the Edgewater tree is an example of what we should expect and to call that successful I would say its not a very good job. Mr. Underhill stated that this tree was on top of a 15 foot dune so its not in a similar setting than what you have with this tree on Atlantic. Mr. Wade suggested pulling this tree off your reference list because the others look a lot better than that one. Mr. Wade stated in order to maximize the opportunity it seems as though you need more time which is what he heard Mr. Underhill stated so he wondered if there should be some kind of contingency or requirement to give this plant the best opportunity. Mr. Wade understands

that the owner wants to build the new home and get on with it but that's the owners concern and his concern is the tree. Mr. Wade stated he's just trying to understand what would be the ideal situation to maximize that.

Mr. Glassburn stated that there is still a happy medium here as he cant imagine this is 80 maybe 100,000 dollars to do something like this maybe more which is just a guess but he thinks they are putting a lot into this project which comes with a lot of risk and they have hired professionals who knows what they are doing but there will always be a risk. Mr. Glassburn stated that even if they just trimmed the tree there's a risk of doing that and building the home. Mr. Glassburn stated that he appreciates what they have done with this project. Mr. Derbyshire stated that that's a great point and a good way to frame the decision is what is the alternative. The alternative would be to significantly trim the tree and build around it which we've worked with our architect on how you could design a home around this tree even with significant setback relief its not an optimal floor plan for anyone would want to live in a normal home. Mr. Derbyshire stated it would require a significant amount of trimming of this tree which would eliminate the grandness it has today and put a significant amount of stress on the tree which isn't their preferred option. Mr. Derbyshire stated that their preferred option for the neighborhood and the island would to see it in a place where it can be viewed from the street and moved. Mr. Underhill stated that the Edgewater tree was also in the center of a heavily wooded lot but now it's a stand alone tree so it was battling all its life until now. Mr. Wade understands that the tree was in a tough spot but he's just trying to ask what the best way to maximize success for Atlantic Avenue.

Mr. Wade stated that if you do 2 months at a time that puts the applicant to move the tree in April. Mr. Wade asked if the applicant was good with moving the tree in April or should it wait another 4 months. Mr. Wade stated that he feels that this would go in favor to have the tree removed and relocated but if they do, that they can look at it in 5 years from now and say, "Da\*\*, those guys kicked a\*\* and made it happen." Mr. Underhill stated that he would never sign up himself or his family's company to do something that would make them look bad. Mr. Underhill stated that he would never want to move a tree on a beautiful island if it wouldn't benefit.

Mr. Miller mentioned that if Mr. Underhill states that then they will take him at his word and they cannot let what happened to the other tree happen to this one like not get its water supply. Mr. Miller stated that someone needs to be assigned that obligation either daily, weekly, etc. Mr. Underhill stated that since that occurrence, the company has hired a company liaison, Mr. Jeff McKee.

Mr. Jeff McKee, employer of Urban Forestry Works, ensured the Commission that he will be the main point of contact during this process and will ensure that once the tree has been relocated that it will be giving the required amounts of water and will flourish in its new location.



Ms. McGee asked what the water source is for the property. Mr. McKee responded by stating that the owners can clarify on the water source. Ms. McGee asked if they would be using town water. Mr. Rhodes responded by stating that they will be using well water. Ms. McGee asked if there was a well on this site. Mr. Derbyshire stated that new wells were installed on all of these properties. Ms. McGee asked if there was intent to install a well on this parcel. Mr. Rhodes confirmed that a well will be installed on this property. Mr. Derbyshire stated that in any event they intend to water the tree. Ms. McGee stated that the property is for sale so the question is who's ultimately going to be responsible person the builder, the current property owner, the new property owner, the current property owner managing it. Ms. McGee asked who would be the responsible person and who does it go against.

Mr. Langley asked if the proposed new location for the tree is that the Sand Dunes Club proper or would it be some sort of common area. Mr. Derbyshire stated that once the tree is moved, it will be located on the parcel that contains the Sand Dunes Club. Mr. Langley asked that they could use the water from the Sand Dunes Club to water the tree. Mr. Derbyshire confirmed. Ms. McGee stated that there isn't a well on site now. Mr. Miller stated that there is one close by. Mr. Langley stated that they own the building so they can use the water from the building. Mr. Wade stated that it would be nice if they could make some sort of arrangement for 24 months from now that the tree is still trying to survive that you know it's a sandy site, properties get sold, houses get built, you can ensure that the tree will still be getting water. Mr. Miller stated to ensure that the tree has water access is Mr. Wades point. Mr. Derbyshire confirmed that it will always have water access.

Mr. Miller can tell that the Commission members are all a little nervous. Mr. Glassburn stated that it's a gorgeous tree but for the owner its going to be their front picture for advertisement if it's a success which it sounds like with your professionals it will. Mr. Glassburn stated that he actually appreciates that they showed a tree that struggled so they get the chance to see that and kind of what happens and them doing what they can to make sure it survives. Mr. Underhill responded by stating that our company is not just represented by the best things that we've done but its everything we've done and in that instance where we've had the walls stacked against us the tree has survived and its made it several years now which he wanted the commission members to see as well. Mr. Glassburn stated that a lot of companies wont do that and its appreciated that they did.

Ms. McGee asked that staff recommendation is to approve with bonding. Mr. Drayton confirmed. Ms. McGee asked who that would go against. Mr. Drayton responded by stating that it would go against the property and if we have to have some sort of special circumstance we can create those as needed. Mr. Drayton stated that typically it would be tied together with the completion of the project. Mr. Langley asked if we would escrow the amount to cover the size of the tree and held. Mr. Drayton stated yes, it would go into the tree fund. Mr. Derbyshire asked for consideration of a reasonable amount of time. Mr. Derbyshire stated that he understands it could be a longer than normal bonding period

because of the complexity of the move and after the tree is successful but there is a period where potentially a new owner could come in and cut it down illegally and he doesn't want the bond to still be at risk because of someone else. Mr. Langley agreed that it needs to be a reasonable set of time and if the Commission allowed the tree to be cut they would have to pay that money anyway. Mr. Derbyshire stated that lets just say the new owner comes in and decided to cut it down, in a normal situation the new owners would pay the bond not them since they cut down the tree is his point. Mr. Drayton stated that no one is cutting that tree down. Mr. Langley asked if the bond was held in escrow for two years, would that suit the owner. Mr. Glassburn stated that's how long it would roughly take to relocate the tree and build the new house. Mr. Derbyshire asked what is the bonding amount for this tree. Mr. Drayton responded by stating that its \$230.00 per inch and this tree is 65 inches so the bond amount would be roughly \$12,000.00. Ms. McGee stated that that's not enough. Ms. Gress stated that the bond amount would be \$14,950.00. Mr. Derbyshire stated that he would be more interested in exploring an LC instead of a natural bond but yea. Mr. Langley stated that the Commission is gambling on the applicant to make the tree live and stated the owner has to have a stake in it somewhere.

Mr. Derbyshire understands and stated that they are talking about a 2 year bond period. Ms. McGee doesn't think 2 years is enough and suggested 5 years. Mr. Glassburn stated that the home will sell eventually and they're the professionals. Ms. McGee stated that the roots don't start growing for 5 years. Mr. Underhill stated that when the tree grows about three feet of stalk the tree has found its water and he thinks that is usually about a year and ½ when it finds its new water source so he thinks a year and a ½ is a good time for that. Ms. McGee stated that on these others haven't been there 5 years and 5 years is when you got the full canopy in. Mr. Underhill clarified that its about 4 to 5 years of anchoring roots. Mr. Wade asked that they propose this tree will have straps on it for 4 to 5 years. Mr. Underhill confirmed. Mr. Underhill stated that the points he brought up regarding the straps seen on the tree on Isle of Palms were straps installed as a request from the property owners for confidence. Mr. Wade responded by stating that every tree he's seen has straps on it right now. Mr. Underhill confirmed that they do all have straps, but those trees were all relocated by the same client who requested them for the storm. Ms. McGee confirmed that the other trees that have straps we just added for the heck of it and haven't been on their full time. Mr. Underhill confirmed. Ms. McGee stated that basically until 5 years comes the trees aren't hurricane proof. Mr. Underhill corrected Ms. McGee by stating that they are just those particular trees have straps on them at the request of the owner to give him personal confidence. Mr. Wade asked a hypothetical which was a year after the tree has been replanted and a storm blows through here will it have enough root to withstand a storm or will it still have tie downs on it. Mr. Underhill stated that the anchoring system on the root ball underground will still be in place but the straps you actually saw were requested by an owner and will not be on this tree. Mr. Langley asked if the underground anchor system will still be in place. Mr. Underhill confirmed. Ms. McGee asked if the anchor system was sufficient enough why add the straps. Mr. Langley stated that he didn't

add them. Mr. Glassburn stated that Mr. Underhill stated that they were put on because of the storm that came through a couple weeks ago. Mr. Langley stated the owner did it not the contractor.

Mr. Derbyshire stated that it sounds like the contractor had a paranoid home owner and the straps wouldn't have been installed unless the owners asked. Mr. Underhill confirmed.

**Ms. McGee made a motion to accept staffs recommendation subject to staff confirming that the placement will provide sufficient long-term distance from the utility lines, have sufficient open area around it, be planted at the appropriate time of year, to allow the root pruning and to prepare the tree, that the property has sufficient water on the site to maintain the tree, that the applicant puts in place the maintenance requirements for the 2-3 years for the tree to be fully established including watering and hurricane protection as needed. Mr. Wade seconded this motion.**

Mr. Miller asked if everyone understood but asked Ms. McGee that she stated 2-3 years for the tree to earn its health back but to clarify that she's talking about the tree health not the tree bond. Ms. McGee stated that she believed we've been told 3 to 5 feet of growth is signs of establishment so they can look for that as an indicator of its health. Ms. McGee stated that they have also been told it doesn't need the anchor roots to survive during a hurricane but we want to be sure that there are plans in place in the event of a hurricane over the next 2-3 years and that the duration of the mitigation bond should remain until our staff believes the tree is well established and growing. Mr. Miller stated that he thinks that's a different matter like he's got it proposed at 2 years but if its stated the way Ms. McGee stated its open ended and not two years but the applicant is asking for a cut off point. He doesn't want it to be 20 years down the road and he still be responsible for this. Mr. Miller stated that the way the motion was made originally it made sense but to add that in it contorts it. Ms. McGee asked if the 2 years begins the moment its planted. Ms. McGee thinks that having a time frame is more a risk than having staff and our experts say when its safely established.

Mr. Drayton stated that his recommendation is to allow the bond in effect from 2 years from the moment the tree is planted or from when Urban Forestry Works has signed off on the tree and they are no longer contracted with the owner. Ms. McGee asked why the Commission can't have staff decide that. Mr. Langley stated that they could get any arborist to do that but thinks the thing to do is to accept the original recommendations, have them pay the escrow and give it the 2 years. Mr. Drayton asked the Commission members to clarify the motion.

Ms. Gress stated that there's a motion on the floor with a second and we need a vote. Ms. McGee asked her to reread the motion. The motion is as follows:

**Ms. McGee made a motion to accept staffs recommendation subject to staff confirming that the placement will provide sufficient long-term distance from the utility lines, have sufficient open area around it, be planted at the appropriate time of year, to allow the root pruning and to prepare the tree, that the property has sufficient water on the site to maintain the tree, that the applicant puts in place the maintenance requirements for the 2-3 years for the tree to be fully established including watering and hurricane protection as needed. Mr. Wade seconded this motion.**

Ms. McGee stated can we just approve this provided that staff fine tunes the details. Mr. Drayton confirmed. Mr. Langley stated that we need to have a definitive motion.

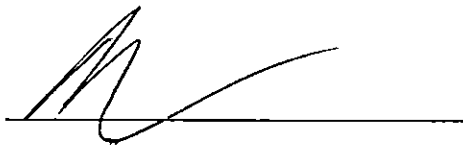
**Ms. McGee made a motion to grant approval for the application presented based on staff recommendations. Mr. Langley seconded this motion. Mr. Wade abstained from the motion. Motion passed 4 to 0.**

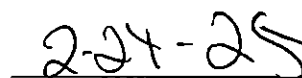
Ms. McGee stated that she would like to ask staff follow through will of the things to they have asked that is critical to the tree. Mr. Miller stated that he thinks that's appropriate and this is the first relocation on Sullivan's Island and so there will be a lot of eyes on this. Ms. McGee stated that if we see this happening in June or July of next year...asked the applicant to ensure that the time of year is right. Mr. Drayton stated that whenever you are planning to move it, it will probably be placed on the Towns website so the public can come and watch. Ms. McGee stated that Mr. Drayton needs a detailed timeline of everything occurring with the timing of this process. Mr. Miller stated that on behalf of the town we all want the tree to survive and flourish which is the end goal no matter how they get there. Mr. Wade stated that he is rooting form them all the way and cannot wait to see this through.

#### **IV. UPDATES FROM TOWN STAFF:**

Mr. Drayton stated that 3 trees fell during Hurricane Debbie and were removed by Town staff. The tree canopy analysis will be started in October. Ms. Fanning stated that Town Council has agreed to move forward with the restoration of the maritime Forest.

**V. ADJOURN: Mr. Glassburn made a motion to adjourn at 6:15 p.m. Ms. McGee seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**

  
Mark Miller, Chairman

  
Date



**Town of Sullivan's Island  
Tree Commission  
Sign in Sheet  
August 26, 2024**

**Print Name**

**Address**

**Email**

MARK MILLER

2504 MARSHALL

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