

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND
TREE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 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 Derek Wade, Madeliene McGee, and Milton Langley.

Members of the public present: Mr. Drew Underhill, property manager with Urban Forestry Works, Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Builders, Mr. Charles Kellner, property owner of 1744 I' On Avenue.

Members of Council: No members of Council were present.

Staff members present: Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Jessi Gress, Licensing and Permit Technician, 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 May 28, 2024:** Mr. Wade made a motion to approve the May 28, 2024 Tree Commission Meeting minutes. Ms. McGee 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, requests 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 and outstanding example of a 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 and to allow space for a new home to be sited where the tree is currently located.

Mr. Drayton stated that staff recommended that the Commission grant approval for the tree to be moved to a location on the adjacent lot to be specified following careful analysis of the utilities in the area to ensure that the new location does not create any new conflicts.

Mr. Derbyshire presented his application to the Board.

Mr. Drew Underhill, project manager with Urban Forestry Works, explained to the Commission what his company does and how their process works. Mr. Underhill stated that they have removed and relocated 275 trees in South Carolina and out of those 275, 2 have failed. The two that did fail were to unrelated issues such as losing power to a well which denied water access to the tree. Mr. Underhill explained that over the course of 6 to 8 months, his team trims the roots, working with one side at a time for six to eight weeks each, to allow for a 10X10 box to go around the root ball for removal and replacement. Mr. Underhill stated that the bottom of the box is designed to cut the bottom roots. Mr. Underhill stated that with this process, the tree canopy will not need to be trimmed or cut in anyway. Mr. Underhill stated that once the tree is removed and relocated, their team provides a 2-year treatment plan after the relocation to ensure that the tree thrives in its new location.

Mr. Derbyshire informed the Commission that where the tree will be placed on 1735 Atlantic Avenue, they intend to remove the large concrete driveway. After conducting a survey and getting all the utility locations marked, if this area is not available due to utility line connections, they will locate in an unencumbered area on the 2-acre lot.

Mr. Sammy Rhodes, owner of Rhodes Residential Construction, stated that after meeting with staff, they suggested that the best approach for saving this tree was to relocate it. Mr. Rhodes stated that trimming the tree or attempting to build around it would just cause too much damage and the tree would not survive.

Mr. Charles Kellner, property owner of 1744 I' On Avenue, asked what the resistance of the tree would be during a hurricane after the transplant is completed.

Mr. Underhill stated that after a transplant is completed, the survival rate of the tree during or after a hurricane is high considering how detailed the treatment plan is.

Mr. Wade believed that moving the tree will cause more stress and harm to the tree and felt that the property owner should attempt to build around the tree or doing something different with the lot such as a small park or nature area. Mr. Wade was not in favor of the application presented.

Ms. McGee asked if the property of 1735 Atlantic Avenue was for sale and if the new owners would be responsible for the tree maintenance. Ms. McGee asked if the current owners have received any sort of site plan to determine if this tree can be planted in the location they are suggesting.

Mr. Derbyshire responded by stating that if 1735 Atlantic Avenue does sell, the proposed owners will be given notice of the tree relocation process. Depending on the agreement, either him as the current property owner or the new owners will take over costs and treatment to ensure that this process is completed accurately. Mr. Derbyshire stated that they do not intend to get a survey done on a lot that he is trying to sell if they cannot go forward with this tree replacement plan. Mr. Derbyshire stated that once they receive

approval from the Commission to do this tree relocation, they will move forward with getting the survey done to ensure a smooth transition.

Ms. McGee agreed with Mr. Wade and requested executive session with town staff to seek legal advise. Mr. Drayton stated that he is not an attorney nor is the Town attorney present and would not be able to provide an executive session for legal counsel at this time.

Ms. McGee made a motion to defer this application provided that the applicant get a site plan conducted showing all utility lines on 1735 Atlantic Avenue. Mr. Wade seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. UPDATES FROM TOWN STAFF:

1. EMERGENCY TREE REMOVAL APPROVED AT 2923 I'ON AVENUE

Mr. Drayton informed the Commission that he and Mr. Henderson, Town Administrator, conducted a site visit at 2923 I' On Avenue regarding the removal of a 24" hackberry tree. Mr. Drayton stated that after a site visit was conducted, it was determined severely hazardous and allowed the contractor to pull an emergency tree removal permit to have it removed as soon as possible.

2. TOWN COUNCIL TREE FUND ALLOCATION

Mr. Drayton stated that Town Council has approved \$25,000.00 from the Tree Fund to be allocated, in addition to the matching \$25,000.00 donations from Dominion Energy (DE) and SCDOT, to allow for tree replanting island wide to replace the trees removed by the DE utility line clearing project.

3. UPDATE ON DOMINION ENERGY LINE CLEARING WORK

Ms. Rebecca Fanning provided a brief update to the Commission regarding the Dominion Energy power line clearing work.

4. UPDATE ON SULLIVAN'S ISLAND NATURE TRAIL, PHASE 2

Ms. Fanning provided a brief update to the Commission regarding the status of the nature trail project.

5. UPCOMING NATIVE PLANT WEEK

Ms. Fanning informed the Commission of the native plant week which is a statewide initiative that will be the week of October 14-18th of 2024.

V. ADJOURN: Mr. Langley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Mr. Wade seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.



Mark Miller, Chairman

8-26-24

Date



**Town of Sullivan's Island
Tree Commission**

Sign in Sheet
July 22, 2024

Print Name

Address

Email

CHARLES + ANDREA KELLNER 1744 IOWA AVE. kelnerfamily@hotmail.com
