

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND
TREE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 25, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Tree Commission was held at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been satisfied. Present were Commission members Derek Wade, Donivon Glassburn, Madeleine McGee, Mark Miller and Milton Langley.

Members of the public present:

Members of Council: No members of Council were present.

Staff members present: Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning, Christina Oxford, Permit and Planning Assistant, and Rebecca Fanning, Director of Resilience & Natural Resource Management.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Miller 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 was present. There were no known members of the media present.
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM , July 28, 2025:** Mr. Glasburn made a motion to grant approval of the July 28, 2025, Tree Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Langley seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

III. TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:

- 1) **3203 MARSHALL BOULEVARD (APPLICATION):** David Tomblin on behalf of Randy Barkowitz, property owner, requests the removal of a Category I, double-leader (15", 9.5") black pine tree (24.5" DBH). The request is being made in response to a violation of Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement). (PIN# 523-12-00-021)

This was a healthy specimen, not located within the new building footprint nor within the buildable area, but in the way of the proposed driveway; the lot has a low canopy cover and is located in an area of the Island that generally lacks canopy cover, likely partially due to the proximity to the salt spray from the beach. The tree that was removed created the greatest amount of canopy cover on the lot (2.14%), but the lot coverage was already below 12%. Staff recommends the Commission consider the replacement value of the tree that was removed and require appropriate mitigation.

Tim Daly of Daly and Sawyer Construction and David Tomblin presented the application to the Commission. They apologized for the removal of the tree that was removed by mistake. They thought the tree was included in a tree removal permit they had received for the property. The tree was also accidentally not included in the tree survey.

No public comment was made.

The Commission members had concerns that the permitting was not followed properly. It was noted that there is low tree coverage on this part of the island due to the high winds and salt spray. There was concern about what kind of tree would thrive on the lot. There is currently no landscape design in place because they are waiting to see what the mitigation will be and build the mitigation into the plan. The Commission wanted the 24 inches of mitigation that was lost when the tree was removed to be mitigated in the landscape plan.

Mr. Glassburn made a motion to approve the application with full mitigation at \$76.00 per inch and require the landscape plan and plantings to replace the 24.5 inches that was lost. Ms. McGee seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed

- 2) 2420 RAVEN DRIVE (APPLICATION): Susan Middaugh, property owner, requests the removal of a Category I bald cypress tree (19" DBH). The request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement). (PIN# 529-06-00-100)

Mr. Drayton stated this is a healthy specimen, as confirmed in the arborist's report, and well adapted to the stressors of this flood prone area. Standing in a side setback alongside a cluster of other trees and shrubs, the roots of this cypress tree show that they have effectively been maintained through mowing to remain at a low height - comparable to that of other shallow-rooted trees like oaks. As the neighboring property owner is in support of the tree's removal, staff recommends for allowing the tree to be removed with full mitigation.

Mrs. Middaugh presented her application to the Commission.

No public comment was made.

The Commission members were in favor of the application as presented.

Mr. Wade made a motion to accept the staff recommendation and approve the tree for removal with full mitigation. Ms. McGee seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

- 3) 1018 OSCEOLA AVENUE (APPLICATION): Charleston Tree Company, on behalf of Robert Brandon Aebersold, property owner, requests the removal of two Category I, live oak

trees (21" DBH & 20" DBH). The request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement). (PIN# 523-06-00-002)

Town staff received one letter of correspondence associated with this property.

Mr Drayton stated based on the decision by the BZA to allow the importation of over a foot of fill on this lot to protect the residence from increasingly frequent tidal flooding and the already stressed existence of these trees, staff recommends for their removal with full mitigation to be paid into the tree fund with the requirement of the specimen trees that are being proposed by the applicant to be planted following the importation of the fill material.

Jay Harper of the Harper Building Group presented his application to the Commission.

No public comment was made.

The Commission expressed that there are not a lot of options for saving the trees given the fill that will be added to the lot in response to the Town's plan to elevate Osceola from 4 ½ feet to 6 ½ feet as a part of the stormwater master plan. Creating circular wells around the trees was discussed but there was concern that they would not be appropriate for this location because they would fill with water.

Mr. Glassburn made a motion to approve staff's recommendation to require the mitigation as proposed by the applicant for 4 – 10" live oaks, and one 13-15" live oak. Mr. Langley seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Staff Updates:

Ms. Rebecca Fanning stated Sullivan's Island will be a Palmetto Partner Sponsor of the Beneath the Oaks Lowcountry Symposium on Creating Resilient Living Landscapes which will take place on Kiawah Island on October 15th during Native Plant Week. The Palmetto Partner level of sponsorship includes 3 full symposium tickets and sponsor recognition in all print and digital materials.

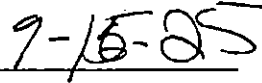
Members of the Commission expressed an interest in holding a workshop to develop guidelines for Tree Commission policies. There was discussion concerning mitigation through planting versus monetary fines. There was also discussion concerning the importance of legacy trees and approving tree permits before building permits.

IV. ADJOURN:

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:14 p.m. Mr. Langley seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.



Mark Miller, Chairman



Date