TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND
TREE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2026

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 Donivon Glassburn, Haley Santos and Derek Wade.

Members of the public present: Adele Tobin of 1659 Middle St, Dolores Schweizer, Librarian at Edgar Allan Poe Library, Ryan Blair of 1918 I'on Avenue, and Gerald Benoit for 2624 Atlantic Avenue.

Members of Council:

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

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Glassburn 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.

I. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM August 24, 2026: Mr. Wade made a motion to grant approval of the August 24, 2026 Tree Commission Meeting Minutes. Ms. Santos seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**

II. **COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**
Mr. Wade made a motion for Mr. Glassburn to be the Chairman of the Tree Commission. Ms. Santos seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wade made nominated Mr. Langley to remain as Vice-Chairman of the Tree Commission. Ms. Santos seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

III. **APPROVAL OF MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2027**
Mr. Wade made a motion to accept the Staff's recommendations for the meeting dates for 2027. Mr. Glassburn asked about the changes to the meeting dates that would shift the November submittal dates to Monday, November 29th rather than November 26th. **Mr. Wade amended the motion to accept the modified schedule for submittal dates and commission meeting dates. Ms. Santos seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. **PUBLIC INPUT AND CORRESPONDENCE**
There was not public input or correspondence.

V. TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS:

1918 Ion Ave: Davis Tree Co., on behalf of Ryan Blair, property owner, requests the removal of two Category I trees, a 21" DBH Bull Pine (*Pinus elliottii*) tree and a 17" DBH Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) tree. The request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement). (PIN# 529-09-00-010) (Supporting Documents: 1)

Ms. Fanning stated the applicant seeks to remove two trees deemed hazardous per the arborist's letter. The 17" Magnolia was impacted by construction activities and has declined dramatically. The 21" Pine tree was damaged at some point many years ago, but has since rebounded, though with a distinctive forked trunk that compromises its structural integrity with its tilt over the house. The Pine is located in the setback, but the Magnolia is not. The proposed tree coverage is slightly above average for the Island, though other trees on the site are in decline, as well. Staff recommends full mitigation for both trees, noting that pines are assessed at one-third of the value of other trees already.

Renee Golden of Davis Tree Company presented the application to the Commission.

No public comment was made.

The Commission members agreed that both trees need to be removed. It was suggested that the pine tree poses a hazard and needs to be removed but no mitigation should be required. The Commission recommended full mitigation for the Magnolia because the damage to the tree is due to construction activity.

Mr. Wade made a motion to allow the removal of both trees with full mitigation for the Magnolia and not mitigation for the pine tree. Ms. Santos seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

2624 Atlantic: Gerald Benoit, on behalf of 2625 Ion Avenue, LLC, property owner, requests the removal of one Category I tree, a 17" DBH Live Oak (Quercus virginiana). The request is being made in accordance with Zoning Ordinance, Section 21-162 B (Application for tree relocation, or removal and replacement). (PIN# 529-10-00-029) (Supporting Documents: 1, 2)

Ms. Fanning stated this 17" Live Oak is located within the side setback, and its principal leader is resting on the eaves of the house. With the current 75% canopy cover on this property, the removal of this oak would open the canopy by about 5%, but likely would fill in with the surrounding branches of oaks. Ms. Fanning stated staff recommends allowing the removal of this tree with full mitigation.

Gerald Benoit presented the application to the Commission.

The Commission stated there is canopy above the tree and so the removal of the tree might help the overall landscape. The Commission suggested there may be no need for full mitigation since the canopy coverage on the lot is so high.

Ms. Santos made a motion to allow the removal of the oak with full mitigation. Mr. Wade stated he could not support full mitigation and he suggested half mitigation. Mr. Donivon recommended half mitigation because it is a well treed lot.

Ms. Santos amended the motion to allow the removal of the oak with half mitigation. Mr. Wade seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

III. STAFF UPDATES

1. **Emergency Removal**
   A 24" Laurel Oak at 1112 Middle St was determined to be dead due to the drought conditions and was removed. Mike Windhorn from the Clemon University Cooperative Extension Center stated he has been seeing a lot of dead oak trees due what they are calling "delayed drought response." He added the tree appears to have Hypoxylon Canker that is a fungus that commonly grows on tree bark and does not cause a problem until the tree comes under extreme stress, such as during a drought. Staff approved the tree for emergency removal.

2. **Consideration of Tree Replacement at Battery Gadsden**

   Ms. Fanning stated she invited Adele Tobin as the key stake holder for the Community Garden at Battery Gadsden and Dolores Schweizer, Librarian at the Edgar Allan Poe Library, to attend the meeting to make sure the planting proposal meshes with the use of the space.

   Ms. Fanning showed a map of the area and the canopy coverage of the area. Ms. Fanning stated the replanting plan considerations for the area include:

   1. Sun & shade- where to create canopy and where to leave open.
   2. Edible, Literary and Historic Landscapes- opportunities to play into surrounding institutions. This is also an opportunity to replace the invasive white mulberry trees with edible native plants like American Persimmon and Blueberries. The literary references could include the Tulip Poplar as it is mentioned in The Goldbug by Edgar Allan Poe and would be fitting because the library is named for Edgar Allan Poe. Palmettos could be included because of the history on the Island and its presence on the State flag.
   3. Showy Blooms- bring bright and colorful plants into the pollinator garden that could include flowering plants that grow in the dunes.

Ms. Fanning discussed locations for planting Goldbug Trees, American Persimmon Trees, Palmettos and Blueberry Hedgerow. The Commission questioned what the plans would be for maintenance of the plants. There are hose hookups that could be used to water some of the plants. Also, water bags could be used to help with the maintenance of the Tulip Poplars or Live Oaks. Ms. Santos suggested that perhaps rainwater harvesting could be used as a creative solution to irrigate the plants. Mr. Wade recommended including compost in the proposed budget for planting. Ms. Fanning stated the next steps would be to take the plan to Council for their review.

IV.ADJOURN: Mr. Wade made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:56 p.m. Ms. Santos seconded this motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

10-26-26

Donivon Glassburn, Chairman Date