

City of Apalachicola Tree Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2020, 3PM

1. Attendees:

Anita Grove, City Commissioner
Pam Richardson, Committee Member and this month's notetaker
Bob Seaborn, Committee Member
Dennis Winterringer, Committee Chairperson

2. Draft Summary of Committee's December 17, 2020 meeting summary prepared by Mr. Seaborn

The Committee voted to adopt with the following revisions the draft summary for the December 17 meeting: change "City Manage" to "City Manager" in Item #3 and correct spelling of Alex Skovronsky's name in Item #6.

3. January 25, 2020 Arbor Day Celebration

As this was our last meeting before our Arbor Day celebration, we went over last minute details. Ms. Grove said that she will arrive at 8:30 AM with a tent, four table and chairs. She will also send reminders of the event to Sam Hand and Ed Duke of FAMU and Karen Kessel of Bring-Me-A-Book. Ms. Richardson plans on distributing flyers for the event at the Wednesday farmers market on January 22. Mr. Seaborn spoke with Debbe Beard with the Master Gardeners and she verified that they will be at the event. All plans seemed to be going smoothly.

4. State Law Concerning Dangerous Trees

Ms. Grove reported that the City Attorney, Kristy Banks, says that the new state law regarding trees (HB 1159) pre-empts all local laws regarding trees. Mr. Winterringer and Mr. Seaborn agree that this is incorrect; in their view, the state law overrules only a small portion of local ordinances. In the case of Apalachicola, state law now says that no permit is required to remove a tree if that tree is dangerous, as determined by a certified arborist or licensed landscape architect. The Committee decided that the simplest approach to clarifying this discrepancy is to note the new state law on both the city's website and the tree removal or pruning application form. We can also point out to tree removal applicants that it may be cheaper and faster to just go ahead and get a permit from the city.

5. FL Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS) Grant Opportunity

Apparently, there was a snafu despite the City's timely submission of the application for a grant of \$4,500 (see Agenda for this meeting) and all the grants are now spoken for. Mr. Winterringer has written a letter to DACS (with a cc to their purchasing office) requesting them to consider awarding Apalachicola a grant if successful grant applicants do not use their entire awards or if other money becomes available. That letter, as of today, is on the City Manager's desk awaiting his signature.

6. Other Business

(a) Mr. Winterringer attended the latest Recreation Committee meeting at which he was informed that they will contact us about their plans to "clean up and fix" what exists at Waterfront Park. It is unclear whether or not they also intend to plant some live oaks at both ends of the park.

(b) Mr. Winterringer has been following up on tree removal/pruning requests by going out with Greg Harris to look at the properties in question and sending his recommendations to the City Manager. Mr. Winterringer is unsure about how the City Manager handles those recommendations. Ms. Grove said she will ask the City Manager.

7. Next Meeting

Our next Tree Committee meeting is scheduled for February 18 at 3PM at the Community Center at Battery Park.