

**City of Apalachicola Tree Committee  
Meeting Summary  
July 21, 2020, 3:00 pm  
Covered Stage at Battery Park**

1. Expected attendees:

Adriane Elliott, City Commissioner, and  
Dennis Winterringer, Committee chairperson.

2. No quorum for meeting.

At a minimum, two of the three Tree Committee members are needed for a meeting quorum. Because there was only one member present (Committee Chairperson), there was not a quorum.

No decisions requiring a quorum were made.

Commissioner Elliott's attendance was a good opportunity to make her aware of Committee activities and to talk about a variety of tree application procedures and tree-related matters.

3. Draft summary of Committee's June 16, 2020, meeting (prepared by Mr. Winterringer).

At the next meeting, the Committee will adopt with or without revision the draft summary for the June 16, 2020, meeting.

Mr. Winterringer will also share with the Committee the summary of this unofficial July 21, 2020, meeting.

4. Unpermitted tree removals.

Mr. Winterringer invited City Manager Travis Wade to this meeting, but he was unable to attend.

Mr. Winterringer has not heard from the City Manager as to whether he fined residential property owners for illegal tree removals at 246 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Frederick S. Humphries, David Cerrato) and 139 9<sup>th</sup> Street (Alfred and Willa Goosby).

5. City's processing of tree applications.

Code Enforcement Officer Revena Ramsey, who processed tree applications, left City employment on June 18.

EP Consultants, Inc. (EPCI), is processing building permit applications for the City. It apparently is also processing tree permit applications.

It is unknown what the City Manager's short- and long-term plans are for processing tree applications.

Over the last several months, tree applications where property owners requested permission to remove or substantially alter protected trees in the absence of new construction have, in contradiction of the Tree Ordinance procedures, been sent to the Planning and Zoning Board for decision. Over the last couple of months, Commissioner Anita Grove has talked to the City Manager about not sending such tree applications to the Planning and Zoning Board.

Without success, Mr. Winterringer tried to obtain a copy of the agenda for the Planning and Zoning Board's July 13 meeting. Accordingly, it is unknown whether such applications continue to be referred to the Board for decision.

Commissioner Elliott said she would also talk to the City Manager about this matter.

#### 6. Reforestation Fund.

On May 29, the Mayor and City Manager agreed with Mr. Winterringer to set up a separate budget account and line item to ensure that Reforestation Fund monies are not mixed with other monies and spent on things other than planting and maintaining trees on City property (e.g., parks, squares, and the rights of way along the highway and streets).

The City Commission adopted revisions to the Tree Ordinance, including a schedule of Reforestation Fund fees, on February 5, 2019, but they didn't go into effect until May 16, 2019.

City staff should review tree removal permits issued from May 16, 2019, to present to determine how much money should be deposited in the Reforestation Fund account.

At the budget workshop that occurs the evening after this Tree Committee meeting, Commissioner Elliott will talk to the City Manager separately or the entire Commission about setting up a separate budget account and line item for the Reforestation Fund.

#### 7. State law concerning dangerous trees.

A State law, which went into effect on July 1, 2019, forbids the City from requiring a tree removal or trimming permit if a residential property owner obtains documentation from an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture or a Florida licensed landscape architect that the tree presents a danger to persons or property.

At its January 21, 2020, meeting, the Committee decided that as a temporary alternative to amending the Tree Ordinance, which is a lengthy process, the simplest approach is to acknowledge the preemption on the City's Building Department webpage and to modify the City's tree permit application to make applicants aware of the State law.

After getting signoff from this Committee at the June meeting, Mr. Winterringer sent the two documents to the City Manager and recommended that the City use them. Mr. Winterringer has not heard from the City Manager as to whether he agrees to use the two documents.

The documents are not posted on the City website. These postings may be on hold until the City decides whether it is going to hire a company to update and maintain the website.

8. Removal of dangerous tree in Battery Park.

As recommended by the Tree Committee, the City removed the laurel oak near the corner of Bay Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street because it had severely rotten trunks and branches and posed a danger to persons (especially during the Seafood Festival) and any vehicle that parked under it.

9. Florida Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) through the Florida Forest Service has announced the opportunity for communities to apply for a grant under the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Applications are due by August 21.

Last year Mr. Winterringer prepared an application that DACS said was not received by its Purchasing Office by the deadline.

Mr. Winterringer does not plan to prepare another application this year. He might contact Alex Skovronsky to assist him in the operation of the City's Global Positioning System unit to inventory trees at Battery and Lafayette Parks this coming winter.

10. Next meeting.

August 18, 2020, 3 p.m., regular monthly meeting of the Tree Committee.