

City of Apalachicola Tree Committee
Meeting Summary
April 16, 2024, at 3 p.m.
Old Library

1. Attendees.

Scott Davis, Tree Committee (TC) member,
Anita Grove, City Commissioner and TC liaison to the five-member Commission, and
Dennis Winterringer, TC chairperson and preparer of summary for this meeting.

2. Summary of TC's March 19, 2024, meeting (Winterringer) – Approved without revisions.

3. Recruiting of new members (all).

With Rebecca Stafford's departure, the TC is two members short of the five persons the committee is supposed to have (or three members short if we think an alternate member is also needed).

TC members will recruit new members and invite prospective new members to the next TC meeting.

The TC Chairperson will ask the City Manager to post a notice for applications on the City website. When an adequate number of applications has been received, the City Manager will include TC member selection on a City Commission meeting agenda. The City Commission is the body that reviews the applications and appoints new members.

4. Committee Chairperson (all).

At the Committee's July 2023 meeting, TC members reelected Mr. Winterringer as Chairperson. He agreed to serve for another 6 months at which time the election of a Chairperson would be again be undertaken.

At the March 5, 2024, City Commission meeting, the City Manager proposed changes to the June 4, 2019, Rules of Procedure for the City Commission of the City of Apalachicola. Included was a proposal to set the term of a chairperson selected by the committee as 1 year and to limit the tenure of the selected chairperson to two 1-year consecutive terms. The City Commission will hold a workshop to discuss whether these and other revisions should be made to the document.

Mr. Winterringer has been on the TC for 7 years and has been the Chairperson for 6 consecutive years.

Mr. Davis is willing to become the new Chairperson, but no vote was taken because TC member Sam Berkheiser was not present at this meeting.

Election of a new Chairperson will be included on the agenda for the May TC meeting.

5. Application to remove patriarch water oak (all).

Phillip Fuerschbach at 189 Avenue E submitted an application for removal of a patriarch water oak on the right of way along 15 Street bordering his corner lot.

The Land Development Code at section 105-26(2)c requires the City to contact the TC for a recommendation when someone proposes to remove a patriarch tree (equal or greater than 35 inches in diameter at breast height). In accordance with this requirement, Code Enforcement Officer P.J. Erwin provided a copy of the application to Mr. Winterringer and asked for the TC's recommendation.

T.C. members gave differing recommendations.

The City Manager decided to remove the tree. A City contractor removed it.

6. Landscaping plan for Lafayette Park (Davis).

Rebecca Stafford discussed the final plan at the January TC meeting.

The TC did not meet in February. Because Mr. Davis did not attend the March meeting, discussion of the following items was deferred until this meeting.

- Native plant restoration area on southeast slope (Davis).
 - Meeting with City Manager to discuss.
 - Permission will have to be obtained from City Commission to proceed with Duke Energy Foundation grant application.
- Water sprinkler system (Davis).
 - Meeting with City employee Rhett Butler to get information on the water supply, including the locations of the lawn sprinkler heads, which he will map.
 - Functionality of system and whether it needs to be modified for the plantings (including the beds around the gazebo and at the Avenue B walkway entrance to the gazebo).

7. Inflation Reduction Act grant application (Winterringer).

Sarah Bourque, the City's grant coordinator, is preparing an application for Inflation Reduction Act money. According to her, the City will be asking for money to remove hazardous trees on City property and to prune palms downtown and at Battery and Lafayette Parks. It is unknown whether the City will also ask for money to plant trees.

It appears that the City will not be requesting money to implement the TC's tree-planting plan for Lafayette Park. Or it might ask for such money but not ask the TC's assistance in preparing the application.

The deadline for submitting an application is April 18.

8. Tree removal at Chestnut Street Cemetery (Winterringer).

In accordance with an evaluation of trees done by a certified arborist in 2016, the Apalachicola Area Historical Society (AAHS) was preparing to use State historic preservation grant money to remove 13 trees at Chestnut Street Cemetery. After the trees were marked and prior to AAHS submitting a tree removal application to the City, cemetery neighbors objected to the tree removals and hired an arborist to conduct another evaluation. As far as AAHS knows, the written report for the April 5 field evaluation is still being prepared.

9. Next TC meeting (all).

The TC has been meeting the third Tuesday of the month at 3 p.m.

When the City Commission holds a special meeting outside its regular monthly meeting (which is the first Tuesday after the first Monday of the month), it often schedules the meeting on the same Tuesday as the TC meeting. There have been scheduling conflicts.

Because of work conflicts, Messrs. Berkheiser and Davis have had difficulty in attending 3 p.m. meetings.

It was decided that future TC meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. or slightly later.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 5:15 p.m.