

**City of Apalachicola Tree Committee**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
**May 15, 2024, at 5:15 p.m.**  
**Old Library**

1. Expected attendees.

Sam Berkheiser, Tree Committee (TC) member,  
Scott Davis, 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 April 16, 2024, meeting (Winterringer) – Approve with or without revisions.

3. Committee Chairperson (all).

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

A vote will be taken on selecting Mr. Davis as Chairperson.

4. Recruiting new members (all).

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).

Prospective new members may attend this meeting.

The procedure for filling vacancies is for the TC Chairperson to ask the City Manager to post on the City's website a notice soliciting applications. 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.

5. Resignation of Code Enforcement Officer (Winterringer).

P.J. Erwin, the City's Code Enforcement Officer who issues tree removal applications, submitted her resignation. Her departure date is unknown.

Ms. Erwin is the 9<sup>th</sup> Officer in the last 5 years (preceded by Wilbur Bellew, Revena Ramsey, T.J. Lemieux, Kevin Newell, Joe Richey, Angela Creamer, Glen Jenkins, and Ken Turner). Because of the high turnover in the position, there has been lack of continuity and consistency in implementing the tree protection standards of the Land Development Code.

6. Requested removal of patriarch water oak and trimming of two patriarch live oaks.

Ms. Erwin forwarded to Mr. Winterringer two requests for protected patriarch trees (equal or greater than 35 inches in diameter at breast height).

The Land Development Code at section 105-26(1)c and 2(c) require the City to contact the Tree Committee for a recommendation when someone proposes to remove or substantially alter a patriarch tree. Paragraphs (1)(c) and (2)(c) respectively apply to private and City property.

- Removal of water oak at 91 17<sup>th</sup> Street.—Property owner Erica Allums submitted an application to remove the water oak near an accessory structure (a garage or shed) indicating that it is an “imminent harm to property or human safety” and a “tree in decline (loss of vigor, poor growth, dieback of twigs & branches). Attached is a copy of the application. The tree is close to the rear property boundary, and it’s unclear whether the tree is on private property or on City property in the alley.
- Trimming of two live oaks at 92 Avenue E.—Property owner Kevin Curry wants to trim two oaks (one apparently on City property in the alley and another close to the property line but on his property according to Ms. Erwin). He did not submit a tree application. TC member Mr. Berkheiser is representing Mr. Curry on proposed development on the property. He may have further details on how much trimming Mr. Curry wants to do and whether it would constitute “substantial alteration,” which the Land Development Code regulates.

#### 7. Inflation Reduction Act grant application (Winterringer).

On April 18, the City submitted an application for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant money.

Unfortunately, the City did not request money to implement the tree-planting plan for Lafayette Park that the TC developed and the City Commission approved.

The City requested \$50,000 for the following activities (rounded from the total of \$49,980 shown in following bullets).

- \$15,000 to trim palms at Battery and Lafayette Parks and downtown (Water, Market, and Commerce Streets) - 100 trees X \$150/tree,
- \$10,980 to inoculate palms to prevent lethal bronzing disease - \$6,300 for 63 antibiotic injection kits and \$4,680 for 60 treatment kits, and
- In Chestnut Street Cemetery,
  - \$6,000 to remove 20 trees – 20 X \$300/tree
  - \$18,000 to plant 18 large palms – 18 X \$1,000/tree.

The City didn’t consult with the Apalachicola Area Historical Society (AAHS) about work at the Cemetery. If it had, AAHS would have:

- Reminded Travis Wade, City Manager, and Sarah Bourque, City grant coordinator, that AAHS is about to receive State historic preservation grant money for removing and trimming trees in the cemetery and for inoculating palms to deter lethal bronzing disease (i.e., if IRA grant is awarded, it will duplicate historic preservation grant money that is already being received), and
- Let them know that planting large palms in the cemetery is problematic because of:

- The care that must be taken in digging large holes in the graveyard to avoid disturbance of marked and unmarked graves and
- The travel of large equipment through tight spaces between graves.

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

In accordance with an evaluation of trees done by a certified arborist in 2016, AAHS was preparing to ask the City for permission to remove 13 trees at City-owned Chestnut Street Cemetery because they posed a threat to fall on grave markers and fences. AAHS would use State historic preservation grant money to fund the removals. 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.

After reviewing the neighbor's arborist evaluation, AAHS reduced the number of trees recommended for removal to 11. Based on their arborist's recommendations, the neighbors countered that only 5 of the 11 trees should be removed.

To support their positions, both AAHS and the neighbors commented at the May 7 City Commission meeting.

The City Commission directed that a group comprised of the City Manager, an AAHS representative, a TC member, and one of the neighbors or their representative meet to see if agreement can be reached on which trees to remove.

TC member Mr. Davis has agreed to be on the group.

The group is scheduled to meet on May 20.

9. Landscaping plan for Lafayette Park (Davis).

Ongoing activities on the Lafayette Park landscaping plan are as follows.

- Native plant restoration area on southeast slope (Davis).
  - Meeting to be held 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 to be held with City employee Rhett Butler to get information on:
    - The water supply, including the locations of the lawn sprinkler heads, which Mr. Davis 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).

10. Next TC meeting (all).

Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.