

**Town of James Island**  
**Minutes of Tree Advisory Council**  
**May 14, 2024**

**Attending Members:** David Tomblin, Garrett Milliken, Paul Cantrell, Julie Hallman, Natalie Rumph & Robin Hardin **Absent Member:** Jenny Welch **Staff:** Kristen Crane

**Approval of May 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes:** Minutes were approved with correction to Mayor's comments and the spelling of Kristen Crane's last name.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Lyon's announced that the motion to change the Town's Tree Ordinance by reducing the size of a grand tree from 24" DBH to 18" DBH was approved May 16 by the Planning Commission. The 1<sup>st</sup> reading of this motion will be voted on by Town Council at their May 16 meeting and, if approved, the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will be voted on at Town Council's June 20 meeting. Mayor Lyon's encouraged TAC's members' attendance at these meetings.

Pushback has been related to property rights and being in sync with the City of Charleston.

Gary suggested that, in the future, it would be optimal to have trees protected not only by size but also by species. He cited data collected by interns and how 56 more trees, of the 130 in the Town's rights of way, would be protected if the DBH is reduced to 18". This increased diversity would better serve wildlife and help mitigate flooding.

Paul made a motion to create a statement of support from TAC to be distributed at the May 16 Town Council meeting. Gary volunteered to draft this statement and send to members for their approval before submitting to Town Council.

Mayor Lyon's reported that a CWS representative is still working with DOT to decide where to put the tree replacing the grand tree lost in the sink hole on Ft. Johnson Road. The decision is taking more time due to demands on CWS's time repairing several major water main breaks.

**Nominations for Tree Canopy Award:** Robin was unable to contact Kathy Woolsey regarding the address of the Sassafras tree she nominated. A Cedar tree will be nominated to receive next Month's Tree Canopy Award.

**Review of Calendar for the Year:** David's business secretary will now keep track of our meeting calendar and related notifications.

**Further Discussion of Free Tree Giveaway:** Planning for this new initiative continued but decisions regarding how to acquire and distribute trees were not made. Jenny was unable

to attend this meeting so any information she gathered from Mt. Pleasant's tree giveaway was unavailable. David noted that fall and winter is the best time to plant trees and it was decided to keep working towards December 2 as the distribution date.

Natalie suggested working with Slow Foods and their peach tree giveaway. David noted that fruit trees generally aren't released until February and are all gone by March. Julie suggested that we offer native trees. Robin asked about whether tree certificates, along with live trees, would be considered. TAC can afford to purchase trees to give away. Natalie will speak to Roots & Shoots and to Hyam's about the possibilities. David will consult with the sources he deals with for his work about possibilities.

Natalie and her husband are redoing the garden at the Arts Center as an interactive garden. A fig tree has already been planted with plans to plant a peach or another fruit tree.

**Purchase of a Watering Tank for Public Works:** Keith Ladeaux is the Town's new Public Works Director. Since his staff will be using any new equipment, he needs to be approached about the purchase of a watering tank and other tree maintenance equipment. There is currently \$3,285. left to spend in TAC's budget before June 30. David made a motion, that passed, to spend this money on tree maintenance equipment that may also include a spray tank and gator bags. David will train the Town's staff in using any new equipment and pesticides. Gary will contact Keith about our desire to spend money for this purpose and get his approval.

The purchase of new trees for Town property and rights of ways was discussed. Since we are a Tree City again this year, \$2./citizen needs to be spent on community trees. Natalie suggested the park on Folly Road as an excellent location for new trees, since more drainage is needed. She likes Willows for drainage control but cautioned the need to be careful of their roots invading water pipes.

The unspent money in our budget this year is due to not having had interns to pay. TAC would like to hire interns again this fall and recruitment possibilities were discussed. Natalie suggested that, in lieu of interns, we might want to use a "professional partner" but members like the idea of using our local colleges. The College of Charleston was helpful in educating interns about data collection.

**Review and Discuss Existing Tree Ordinance:** This topic was tabled until our June meeting. It will be a lengthy project and there was a suggestion to work on a piece of the current Ordinance at every meeting. David advocates the hiring of a zoning professional to use our ideas to write up the new proposed Tree Ordinance.

**Good of the Order:** Gary thanked Kristen Crane for her work on the information presented to Town Council supporting the protected tree size change.

Paul Cantrell has given serving as TAC's Vice President consideration and said that he will be willing to serve in this capacity. He was voted in unanimously.

**The next meeting of TOJI Tree Advisory Council will be Tuesday, June 11, 5pm.**