

CITY OF BILOXI

TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

Time / Location: Community Development Conference Room
3:30 – 4:30 pm

MINUTES

JANUARY 10, 2023

I. The meeting was called to Order at 3:35 p.m.

Members present: Tracy Wyman (ex officio member Chair); Shirley Robinson (2); Susan Peterson via phone (4); Wendy Lally (5)

II. Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

III. December 2022 minutes were read with minor revisions made by those present. Susan motioned the minutes be approved as revised; Shirley second the motion.

IV. Ongoing Business

A. Action Tracking:

- No projects were added this period.
- No projects were moved to “closed” this period.

B. Site Visits & Recommendations

2023_TR-23-001_Sonny Bhakta_570 Beach Blvd

The committee submitted recommendations that this project be tabled based on the following:

- The proposed design was denied by the Architectural Review process, and a redesign has been requested. In addition to architectural concerns, there are valid concerns about access from Comfort Place, a small residential street, and the impact the tree removals and the height of the proposed structure would have on the privacy of the residents along Comfort Place.
- While the zoning for this project does allow for commercial development, the tree ordinance does not allow for removal of a large number of protected and substantial live oaks.
- The Live Oaks on this property have been deemed ‘healthy’ by the former City Arborist.
- A design was proposed by the owner a couple years ago that worked around these heritage oak trees, incorporating them into a well-designed plan. The Committee recommends the owner consider a proposal more in keeping with a design that would celebrate these trees, rather than remove them.

The full Recommendations are available on the Tree Committee web page.

Everyone was reminded that it is important that a member of the Tree Committee be present and Tree Hearings to ensure the recommendations are read in their entirety, which is required by the LDO.

D. Committee Reports

- PR / Communications – A January article as been published in the BNews on the Majestic Tree Program. A February article will be drafted on a topic suggested by Wendy Lally, *“The Communities Role in Public Meetings: Your Opportunity to be Heard”*.
- Majestic Tree Program – The Director of Community Development is working on framing a resolution for majestic tree nominations to be heard before the City Council. This task was not completed in time for them to appear on the January 3 agenda as planned.

Tracy forwarded the Majestic Tree Program instructions and link to Cecelia for upload to the Tree Committee webpage; she will follow-up to ensure this is done.

- City Beautification Program – Tracy has inquired with the City multiple times since March about this document, and has not received a response. This will be included in the Report to City Council.
- Permit Report: While the position of City Arborist remains unfilled, these permit applications are not being forwarded to us.

Additionally, the Committee needs one of its members to take on the task of uploading these emails (when they start being sent out again) to the permit tracking spreadsheet.

- DRC Report: Shirley reports there have been no recent tree issues presented in DRC meetings. Tracy will replenish Shirley’s and Wendy’s supply of brochures to assist with DRC meetings.

VI. Outstanding Issues

There has been no progress in getting the draft report to the Director of Community Development.

VII. Current Business

- A. The open position for City Arborist has been posted on the City Job Advertisement page.
- B. Ward 3 and Ward 7 Vacancies. Matt Dubaz (Ward 3) and Pam Barlow (Ward 7) have resigned from serving on the Committee. We are grateful to each of these members for their years of support and service.

Tracy will reach out to Council Members and the Mayor to work to fill these open positions.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned: 4:25 p.m.