

CITY OF BILOXI TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

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

MINUTES

AUGUST 14, 2023

- I. The meeting was called to Order at 3:340 p.m.

Members present: Tracy Wyman (1); Susan Peterson (4); Wendy Lally (5);
Jeremy Herring (7)

City Council or Staff present: Zack Harris, City Arborist
- II. Public Comment: No members of the public were present.
- III. July 2023 minutes were read and approved.
- IV. City Arborist Comments.
 - A. Has been attending Main Street meetings; will serve on How-Hop Committee as a means to increase awareness among other leaders in Biloxi regarding majestic trees and most important, mitigation tree plantings.
 - B. Mitigation Trust received \$19,200 from the Arbor Landing Projects for mitigation of trees removed on that development, and \$3,200 from Big Play for removing unpermitted Live Oaks.
 - C. Currently assessing where to plant mitigation trees (estimated \$7-10k per tree). Will work with Tree Committee to update existing
 - D. MSGCCC Campus road project mitigation plan / agreement is currently in process.
- E. Ongoing Business
 - A. Action Tracking:
 - Add: Goose Point, Phase 2 will be moving through the process.
 - Closed:
 - The Reef Express. This project moved ahead (unfortunately), with assurance that it will not happen again.
 - Popps Ferry Road Strip Mall. CA worked w/ developer through the mitigation and landscape plan; native trees will be planted including a 20' buffer.
 - Cara Lee Circle. Tree company was made aware of the infraction and has assured that unpermitted removals of this nature will not happen again.
 - B. Site Visits & Recommendations
 - None this period.

C. Committee Reports

- PR / Communications –
 - Tracy will prepare an article *“The Communities Role in Public Meetings: Your Opportunity to be Heard”*.
 - Zach will be preparing articles as well
 - Tracy will present the Majestic Tree Program at the September Main Street Meeting.
- Majestic Tree Program –
 - 2 Trees were presented at approved by the Mayor and City Council during July. These were the first two trees to be designated as the City of Biloxi Majestic Trees;
 - Susan announced that the Live Oak at the Old Brick House, as well as two other private property trees have received SOT designation and nominated those to the Committee for City of Biloxi Designation. The Tree Committee will move forward with presenting these to City Council.
 - Robin will continue to work to get the tree at the Keesler Gate designated.
 - The system needs to be refined in the following areas:
 - Two different forms (and thus processes are published on-line. Tracy will work with Zach to reconcile this.
 - The Committee would like to see the majestic tree designation a bit more celebrated before City Council. We will start by having a Committee member announce / present these trees during the 3-minute public voice portion of the meeting. Zach will work with us on this as well.
 - Susan would like to see recipients presented with a certificate; we will look into who can / should do this, and how we can get this started.
 - There was discussion on whether the committee should accept trees that are over a structure or not visible from public access. It was decided that neither of these should be considered, but that overall health of the tree must definitely be considered.
 - The Mayor has promised that these trees would be mapped. Tracy will create an ESRI Story Map and begin sharing this link with members and on the City website. Eventually, this can be updated by another tree committee member, or by a member at large, in order to engage the community in this process.
 - As a reminder, our goal is to have 25 majestic trees designated in 2023.

- City Beautification Program – Zach’s efforts to develop a plan for mitigation sites could be incorporated into a City Beautification Plan. Tracy will send the CA examples of beautification plans from other cities, and work to move this forward with the City.
- Permits: Past permits (August 2022– August 2023) still need to be added to our tracking spreadsheet. Zach will make copies of all permits issued, and Tracy will add these to a spreadsheet for presentation to City Council.
- DRC Report: Jeremy and Shirley has been attending DRC meetings when they can.

VI. Outstanding Issues

There has been no progress in getting the draft report to the Director of Community Development. Tracy will get the draft to the committee. We have been advised by the CA to move forward with a simplified report so that we can begin to give regular and more complete reports in the future.

VII. Current Business

- A. Tracy has been approved by the Director of Community Development to move from ex-officio to Ward 1 representative. These made sense with Robin’s departure from the Committee.
- B. Larry Tucei, tree historian did not attend as planned. We will look for him in September.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned: 4:53 p.m.