

CITY OF BILOXI TREE COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: Community Development Conference Room

Minutes

June 4, 2025

- I. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.
Members present: Debra Carr (1), Jeremy Herring (7), Wendy Lally (5), Susan Peterson (4), and Jamie Tamburo (2).
Excused: Mark Dubaz (3) and Doug Deluca
City Council or Staff present: Mr. Jerry Creel, Director of Community Development and Paul Tisdale, Ward 5 Council Representative.
- II. Minutes: May minutes were approved.
- III. Public Comment: I welcomed the guests that were in attendance and asked them to sign in. I reminded everyone that they have a total of 10 minutes to speak. We do not usually allow discussion but if you would like to speak, please wait to be recognized. Several people attended (see attached sign in sheet.) There were a few comments, suggestions and questions. I thanked everyone for attending.
- IV. Ongoing Business:
 - A. Updates / Comments from City Arborist: Mr. Creel told us the City Arborist position is still posted and has not been filled. There have been applicants but they are not qualified. The City has increased the pay. He has found a local arborist Brad Magnus that is certified and will work as needed. Mr. Creel is still acting as temporary arborist but with restrictions for granting tree permits. He is only approving permits for removal of protected dead or diseased trees and for trees that need to be removed because of insurance requirements. They have made sure to have photos of these trees. No protected trees that are healthy have been removed. He has provided a printed list of the trees that have been granted permits. This list will be attached to the minutes. A group of protected trees There were a few comments, suggestions and questions. A group of protected trees presented by Mr. Creel for removal was questioned by Wendy Lally. These are owned by a private homeowner at 988 Wildwood Lane and had

been added to the report earlier that morning. Mr. Creel stated he would advise the permit desk that they need to have better information before adding a tree permit to the list. He will check into this status and make sure it is accomplished correctly.

B. Action Tracking (15 min): Temporarily on hold.

C. Site Visits and Recommendations:

Hawk Creek subdivision tree survey is on hold. A working tree committee meeting will be scheduled when we have the required paperwork.

D. Committee Reports:

- DRC Attendance: Susan Peterson attended these DRC meetings: May 7th, 14th, 21st, and the 28th. No one needed to attend the June 4th meeting as there were no trees on the agenda.

- PR/ Communications and Upcoming Events:

I was very excited that the Preservation in May Program has spotlighted our Majestic Trees in Biloxi. The first Thursday was the "Patriarch" live oak tree at Mary Mahoney's. The second week was the Danny Guice live oak tree behind City Hall and the "Querens" magnolia tree off Esposito St. and Querens Ave. At the Firehouse Museum I gave a presentation of our Majestic Tree program with a slide show for our Majestic Tree process and the Societe Des Arbres. Billy Guice, Danny Guice's son, brought his family's framed Societe Des Arbres certificate. I also provided registrations for both Majestic Tree designations. Jane Shambra gave the tree history at the Danny Guice tree for the citizens attending the Preservation programs before they proceeded to the Fire Museum. The third week they highlighted the Old Brick House live oak tree and the final week they showcased the many protected trees at Camp Wilkes. Camp Wilkes is also in the process of registering their Majestic trees with both the Societe Des Arbres and the City of Biloxi. WLOX did an interview on the Danny Guice live oak tree. The preservation in May gift to everyone who attended the weekly Preservation programs was a poster of our protected trees. I have brought some with me for the Committee members and guests if they would like a poster? The next tree article will be the Danny Guice Tree and a reminder about how to prepare your trees for hurricanes which I wrote and was in the BNews last year and is on the City of Biloxi Tree web page.

- Majestic Tree Program:

*I have a copy of the Danny Guice Live Oak Tree and the Querens Magnolia registrations and their certificates from the Societe des Arbres.

*We are still waiting for approval for the six live oak trees to be planted at Eagle Point Park in Woolmarket. I have been checking on the trees planted for Arbor Day around the City and they appear to be doing well.

*I have discovered two different groups of protected trees that were registered at Biloxi High School and Mary L Michele Jr. High. They are named Indian Oaks, 5 live oaks and Tomahawk Trees, 5 live oaks and 1 magnolia tree. These trees were registered in 1973. I am working on having them accepted in the City of Biloxi Majestic Tree Program.

*There is a live oak tree behind the Natorium that needs to be addressed. I have checked and it belongs to the City of Biloxi w/ the Biloxi School Systems. Both are working to have it cleaned up and mulched.

*The health assessment of the Querens Magnolia Tree has been accomplished and will be addressed. The tree has received its quarterly fertilizing.

- City Beautification Plan:
Temporarily on hold.

V. Current Business:

A. Tree Committee Comments: None

B. Chairperson / Secretary Comments:

I have assisted in applying for the RESTORE Act Grant offered from the MS Commission Forestry (MFC) which has 7.2 million dollars for our local counties. These grants are for Canopy Assessment, Green Infrastructure Projects, Tree Planting, Tree Management Plan, Tree Inventory and Invasive Tree Removal. We had to provide a survey and return it by the end of May. This survey was sent to us by Loren Erickson our Urban and Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator for Regions 3 & 4. There are no requirements for matching monies or actual physical assistance. I am hopeful we will get the grant for our Canopy Assessment and Tree Inventory. I have been invited to two different local Garden Clubs to present our Majestic Tree Program and registration for the City of Biloxi.

C. Committee Reports: None

D. Reports to the City: None

VI. Old Business:
There was no old business.

VII. Meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.

Submitted by:

Susan Peterson
Tree Committee Chairperson/Secretary