

Southport Forestry Committee

Meeting Minutes – 11 April 2023

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. In attendance were members Scott A. Len, Roxie Smith, Bif Bream, Marianne Huntley, Dina Rousset, Fred Fiss, and Heather Kos. Travis Henley and Chris Martin represented City Staff, and Davis Lowe represented the Board of Alderman. Guests included Michael McGee from the City Grounds Crew.

1. March meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.
2. Chris/Travis brought to committee's attention that major subdivision plat (adjacent to Hammocks) is on agenda for alderman meeting on Thursday. The plan includes removing a significant number of trees. This is an area that already has some flooding issues which heightens concerns for many residents. Travis noted that the development is subject to older version of city ordinances (approx. 3 yr old ordinances) due to when plan was originally submitted which had much fewer restrictions. It was requested that committee members attend the meeting as possible to provide information and support.
3. Fred/Travis brought to committee's attention that the 3 maples planted when the ABC store was developed have died. This highlights concern that city needs a way to enforce not just that trees are planted but that they are supported and maintained. Travis noted that code enforcement is being reviewed.
4. Two of the newly planted trees at Taylor Park were uprooted in recent windstorms. They have been staked and fertilized with potash. Stakes will remain for at least a year.
5. Payment for this year's tree purchase has been completed. Purchasing trees from same farm will continue. Transport and planting costs will likely be higher due to the larger trees.
6. Arbor Day (April 28th) plans were discussed and finalized. A proclamation will be read at this week's alderman meeting. Roger Shew (UNCW) is the guest speaker for the Arbor Day event and a representative of the Forest Service will also be on hand to recognize Southport holding Tree City USA designation for 19 years. Ice cream truck is confirmed and Scott will bring sound system. Start time is noon and plan is for a 30-40 minute program in total.
7. Naturefest will occur on April 29th from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. Forestry committee will have an information table at the event. Schedule of volunteers was finalized. Scott asked committee members volunteering to familiarize themselves with list of native trees and the tree ordinance.

8. Scott updated committee on City's effort to standardize terms across city committees— terms will be staggered and term lists are proposed. The terms will be codified in the Code of Ordinances.
9. Live Oak Society updates. Presentation to Kiwanis next week. Article and social media posts will be done. Goal is for committee to submit to LO Society in late fall.
10. Utility pruning continues around Southport. The goal is to clear power lines for safety.
11. Tree Champion – Marianne presented Nomination Form. A suggestion was made to make it more clear tree needs to be in Southport. Scott and the committee expressed their appreciation for the great work done by Marianne on this important initiative. Committee will do a final review at May meeting.
12. Travis brought to the committee's attention that land use is being actively discussed in Raleigh. These changes if approved could pre-empt local control in development. Alderman and town staff are closely watching and request support by contacting representatives.
13. Scott updated committee on status of trees on Garrison lawn and Bay Street. The plan is to let the tree have some time to attempt to recover and then possibly hire an arborist to clean up a bit.
14. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Dina Rousset - Committee Member.