

Southport Forestry Committee

Meeting Minutes – 14 February 2023

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. In attendance were members Scott A. Len, Roxie Smith, Marianne Huntley, Bif Bream, Dina Rousset, and Fred Fiss. Travis Henley and Chris Martin represented City Staff, and Lowe Davis and Karen Mosteller represented the Board of Alderman. Guests included Arborist Sean Schaffer from “Never Stumped Tree Service”, Michael McGee from the City Grounds Crew, and Donna Wofford of Cape Harbor Drive.

1. January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved
2. No updates on the Ordinance or Permits from Chris. Travis noted that the updated UDO with September text revisions should be up on the City and Forestry web pages soon and that there had been discussion about the City undertaking a more rigid enforcement policy with regard to the UDO writ large. The UDO, including the Tree Preservation chapter, will be reviewed by the new City lawyer to determine if there are any issues precluding this enhanced enforcement.
3. Newsletter for March (Annual Tree Planting) has been completed by Scott; The April newsletter submission (Scott) will highlight and serve as an advertisement for this year’s Arbor Day celebration on 28 April.
4. All of the 2023 tree plantings have been completed at Taylor Field; there are 8 live oaks which were planted around the track perimeter, 2 Nuttall oaks planted near the pavilion, and 2 red maples at the entrance. One live oak went over in the windstorm the day after planting and has been raised and staked. Scott indicated that given the regular rain events over the last couple of weeks he has only had to water once since planting day.
5. It was noted that Roger Shew (UNCW) has agreed to be the speaker for the Arbor Day event. The time start has been moved to 1200 (vice 1100) to accommodate Mr. Shew’s schedule.
6. Arbor Day. Scott noted that at next month’s meeting time will be spent finalizing the schedule and agenda. Bif indicated he would reach out to his musician friends to see about providing some music at the event. Scott will work with Tourism on provision of the Ice Cream truck.
7. Travis noted that Southport’s renewal application for “Tree City USA” status had been approved; Southport has now been a Tree City for 19 years.

New Business:

1. Marianne had submitted two articles to the State Port Pilot (Lee Hinnant) as examples for the proposed monthly column. Still no reply at this time but she will follow up;
2. Scott reminded everyone of the ongoing Naturefest speaker series. The next talk is February 28th and the topic is "Bee City and Pollinator Garden". He also indicated that he had attended the Jan 13th Naturefest meeting organized by Lora Sharkey in preparation for this year's event (April 29th). The Forestry Committee will field an informational table at the event from 0830-1230.
3. Roxie spoke on the status of the drive to enroll trees in the "Live Oak Society". Roxie noted she had highlighted the program at a Rotary meeting, and Scott had done the same for the Southport Garden Club. Roxie and Scott assisted with the measurements of one private tree, and Marianne brought applications for two public trees on E. Nash. Scott has appointments for further measurements tomorrow. The Committee will compile a list of Public trees to be nominated and will undertake the measurements/applications all at one time.
4. Tree Champion program. Marianne discussed the "Tree Champion" program and noted that she is working on a framework of criteria. She suggested that if there are some candidates that we could make several awards at the Arbor Day Celebration which was generally agreed to.
5. Scott introduced Sean Schaffer to the Committee Members, and Mr. Schaffer spent a good amount of time offering his observations on issues he's seen with the trees in our area, as well as his philosophy regarding pruning and general tree care. This generated an interactive discussion on a variety of subjects related to some of the challenges we face with regard to maintaining Southport's urban forest and was well received by the Committee.
6. During the closing "around the table" Scott noted that he had received a \$30 "honorarium" for speaking at Garden Club, which he intended to turn over to the Committee/City – Travis said he would talk to Finance and see how about doing it. Fred pointed out that the Committee now had a picture album compiled by Betty Timberlake and presented to the Aldermen in 2006 showing trees planted by the Committee. Scott has scanned a number of them and taken "now" photos to show the amount of growth. These will be used in future articles/Newsletters.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 1810.

Scott A. Len Committee Chairman.