

Southport Forestry Committee

Meeting Minutes – 14 March 2023

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. In attendance were members Scott A. Len, Roxie Smith, Marianne Huntley, Dina Rousset, and Fred Fiss. Travis Henley and Chris Martin represented City Staff, and Karen Mosteller represented the Board of Alderman. Guests included Michael McGee from the City Grounds Crew, and Alli Scouler (516 Clarendon).

1. February meeting minutes were reviewed and approved
2. Alli Scouler from 516 Clarendon spoke about finding her dream lot in Southport as it had a large live oak in front yard. She commented she bought the tree more than the lot and then built her house in such a way (set towards rear of lot) in order to preserve the beautiful tree. A fabulous success story for tree preservation. The committee commended and thanked Alli for her efforts.
3. Roxie will work on a newspaper article highlighting Alli's story.
4. No updates on the Ordinance or Permit issues from Chris. Travis noted that the updated UDO with September text revisions is live on the City and Forestry web pages. The new city attorney is undertaking a review to see if there are ways to strengthen and simplify.
5. Newsletter for April (Arbor Day) has been completed; The May newsletter submission (Scott) to be determined.
6. All of the 2023 tree plantings have been completed at Taylor Field and they appear to have taken well with either leaves out or buds in place. Scott mentioned he checks in daily to see if they have bloomed.
7. Arbor Day (April 28th) plans were discussed. Roger Shew (UNCW) has agreed to be the speaker for the Arbor Day event. A representative of the Forest Service will also be on hand to recognize Southport holding Tree City USA designation for 19 years. Scott thanked Michael for picking up the Tree City sign. It will be used at entrance to park on Arbor Day then moved to its permanent place at entrance to town. Randy is looking to organize an ice cream truck for the event and committee plans to offer tour of trees to anyone interested. Start time is noon and plan is for a 30-40 minute program in total.
8. Naturefest will occur on April 29th from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm and Forestry committee will have an information table at the event. Schedule of volunteers to be finalized next meeting.
9. Scott noted that City is looking to standardize terms across city committees which may require some modification for Forestry Committee. He also reminded all members that

all business should be conducted during meeting and not via e-mail due to open meetings law.

10. Scott brought to committee's attention two issues involving trees. This was for awareness purposes only. No decision required or requested from Forestry committee:
 - a. Up Your Arts is currently researching repurposing Old City Hall into an Arts Center. There are currently 3 live oaks at rear of site and 1 in front. Tree ordinance may come into play based on development proposal.
 - b. A local citizen has begun a petition to prevent the removal of a live oak on a private piece of property in the Landings neighborhood. Chris and Scott both received calls about the tree. Travis and Scott walked property and Travis has also spoken with builder. Builder is aware of the ordinance and ensures new trees will be planted as per the ordinance.
11. Roxie spoke on the status of the drive to enroll trees in the "Live Oak Society". 1 person has applied – Kelli Edwards on Stuart Avenue and a few other applications are in progress. Please e-mail Roxi any suggestions of trees to add to list of Public trees that Committee will be submitting applications for.
12. Tree Champion program. Marianne presented a draft of the framework for the "Tree Champion" program. She requested that committee members review and that it be discussed at the May meeting. She suggested Alli be recognized as a Tree Champion at Arbor Day this year. A motion was put forward and passed unanimously. The committee discussed how the Tree Champion had been started in 1998 by Betty and how the committee wanted to develop a process and framework so that it continues as a tribute to her.
13. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Dina Rousset - Committee Member.