



Tree Board - Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Town Council Chambers

The Tree Board held a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Town Council Chambers, 30 S. Main Street, Weaverville, N.C.

1. Call to Order

Roll Call

Tree Board Members Present: Chairman Russ Kantner, Pauline Griffith, Inger Stallman Jorgensen, Jeff Colavecchia, Gary Harmon, Caroline Lord, Caleb Hudson.

Absent: Greg Sanfilippo

Staff Present: Town Clerk Tamara Mercer and Planning Director James Eller.

2. Adopt Agenda

Gary Harmon Moved to adopt the agenda.

Carried unanimously.

3. Adopt 2025 Tree Board Meeting Schedule

Chairman Kantner moved to adopt the 2025 Tree Board Meeting Schedule.

Carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes- December 4, 2025

Inger Stallman Jorgensen moved to approve the December 4, 2024 Tree Board meeting minutes.

Carried unanimously.

5. Tree Conservation Regulations, Planning Director Eller

Planning Director Eller presented the Staff report for Section 20-2309 Conservation Subdivision Standards and reviewed the Tree Conservation regulations. The current goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), last updated in November 2023, call for the consideration of tree conservation regulations. The goal of considering the tree conservation regulation was also given number 2 (medium) priority within the CLUP giving staff the direction to accomplish or address the stated goal within 24 months. This is recently enacted conservation subdivision standards for large undeveloped or underutilized parcels within municipal borders.

Mr. Eller pointed out that the Planning Department administers the Code of Ordinances for all property owners within the Town limits and the Tree Board addresses the trees on Town owned property such as the Town's parks, and town owned facilities, and public streets rights-of-way.

Current town ordinance requires development of a certain type or scope to comply with landscape regulations. These regulations include the submittal of a landscape plan, landscaping requirements that require at least 5% of the subject property to be landscaped, street tree requirements, and landscaping requirements for off street parking and loading areas. These landscape regulations do provide a credit for existing trees of a certain size to be preserved instead of planting new required trees so there exists a built-in incentive if it is chosen by the property owner. Mr. Eller pointed out that the Planning Board lowered the threshold to 10 lots in order to capture more lots under the tree conservation initiative.

There was a question-and-answer period. In response to Mr. Harmon's question regarding a text amendment implementation, Mr. Eller explained the Town Council timeline, and we expect Town Council to set a public hearing date for February for these proposed regulations.

In response to Mr. Harmon's question regarding landscape plan enforcement, Mr. Eller explained the Land Development Code regulations in the commercial, industrial and business districts, and for residential housing in R-1, R-2, and R-12 multi-family subdivisions, with respect to bonds and performance guarantees are in play for the Town's site plan enforcement upon completion of projects. Upon such completion, the town returns the fees. Mr. Eller further explained the permitting process with respect to Technical Review Committee for infrastructure, administration, engineering, and roadway improvements.

Mr. Eller expounded on parking lots, landscaping and tree islands on commercial projects, with respect to percentage calculations for landscaping and open space requirements in the code. Mr. Eller agreed that an updated tree and landscaping species list is long overdue, and once the proposed Tree Board recommended species list, that submission is put before

the Town Council for final consideration, once approved the suitable species list becomes adopted by ordinance.

Mr. Eller added that in the proposed text amendments are the Planning Board recommendations for lowering the parking space requirements. A decrease of parking spaces could be included for commercial and residential lots and thus allow for more landscape and green space.

6. Continued CODE Chapter 32, Species List trees and vegetation

Tree Board members' deliberations regarding the species list, for large, medium and small trees.

Deliberations regarding Eastern and Carolina Hemlock ensued. Ms. Lord explained the initiative to save the Hemlock trees with pesticide treatments are proving successful. The Tree Board could campaign to educate the public that Hemlock is good for our ecosystem. There was further discussion on the American Elm.

Gary Harmon made a motion to remove the hybrid Cornus kousa or Florida flowering Dogwood, from the species list.

Carried unanimously.

Ms. Stallman pointed out that planting new ash trees is not recommended due to emerald ash borer which feeds on our species of Ash trees.

Inger Stallman Jorgensen made a motion to remove Fraxinus americana, or White Ash and Fraxinus pennsylvania or Green Ash from the species list.

Carried unanimously.

7. RFQ Tree Inventory presentation/review

Mr. Colavecchia submitted the request for quotation for conducting a comprehensive inventory of public trees, develop an urban forest management plan, and provide recommendations for tree conservation, risk management, and long-term sustainability. The project will support data-driven decision-making to enhance urban tree health, mitigate risks, and improve ecological services.

Staff recommends the Tree Board approve the Request for Quote services for tree inventory, first phase to begin at the Lake Louise portion of the Town Park and rights-of-way. This RFQ will need to be brought before Council during their budgetary deliberations process as a request of the Tree Board's Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget item.

After board member review the general consensus to change section 2. Scope of Work under B. diameter from 25 to 30", and Section 6. Evaluation Criteria as follows:

- Experience and expertise in urban forestry and conservation (25%).
- Proposed methodology and innovation (25%).

- Cost and overall value (25%).
- References and past performance (15%).
- Commitment to public engagement and education (10%).

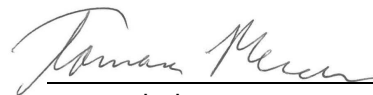
Pauline Griffith made a motion to approve the RFQ with the aforementioned adjustments.

Carried unanimously.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Kantner noted that Arbor Day date and discussion to be addressed at the February meeting.

There being no further business, and without objection, Chairman Kantner adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.



Town Clerk
