

**CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE**  
**Tree Ordinance Revision Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting of May 30, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Glenn Lange (Tree Board), Mary Davis (Tree Board), Neil Brown (Planning Board), Caitlyn Gendusa (Public Works), Virginia Tegel (ESB), Steve Dozier (BAC), Daniel Heyman (Legal), Susan Frady (PEP), Lew Holloway (Community Development), Mark Stierwalt (Public Works), Lyndsey Simpson (City Council), Debbie Roundtree (City Council)

- I. **Call to Order:** Mark Stierwalt introduced the Committee and discussed a tree canopy survey currently being conducted in the City of Hendersonville that should be ready within about three months.
- II. **Background:** Glenn Lange gave background information regarding the formation of this committee and the needs for revisions to City ordinances regarding trees.

Mr. Lange explained that the last tree canopy survey done in 2009 determined that the City has 36 percent canopy coverage, which is very low among NC communities that have conducted similar studies. He also explained some of the benefits of trees, and discussed the goals of the Tree Board.

Mark Stierwalt identified some of the goals discussed by Tree Board, developers, and the City Council, including a desire to make the process of review more efficient and predictable for developers, and to prevent additional mature tree loss.

Neil Brown identified enforcement and ongoing maintenance of required plantings as an additional goal. There was a discussion about enforcement, Susan Frady as the former Development Assistance Director explained how enforcement went in the past, and Lew Holloway discussed some of the challenges they are facing presently.

- III. **Existing Ordinances:** Mr. Holloway discussed the existing ordinances related to tree protection in the City. They can be placed primarily into two categories, voluntary preservation/incentives, and required plantings.

Zoning ordinance requirements are primarily focused on screening. There are required plantings to buffer certain use types, and for vehicular use areas. Developers can get credits towards required plantings for retaining existing mature trees.

Mr. Holloway explained some of the details of the ordinance provisions related to landscaping and how they are applied to new development.

- IV. **Proposed Ordinance Discussion:** Glenn Lange discussed some of the proposed changes outlined by the Tree Board. They are proposing to retain certain significant trees for new development and redevelopment, and to apply certain landscaping requirements to more development types.

There was a discussion amongst the committee about some proposed provisions that are not directly related to regulating trees, including a prohibition on developing steep slopes, mass grading, and an increase of the required stream buffer.

There was a discussion about some potential challenges posed by instituting these new regulations including: where to plant street trees when overhead and underground utilities might be present, and the cost to the developer/the consumer and the effect on affordable housing.

The committee decided that steep slopes, stream buffers, and mass grading were probably outside of the scope of the immediate task before the committee.

Councilmember Simpson suggested providing a method for a fee-in-lieu of planting/retaining trees. Mr. Lange pointed to some of the language in the Tree Board's proposed revisions that attempts to place a value on mature trees.

The committee discussed the anticipated tree canopy survey, and discussed where new development will likely be proposed in the future.

Daniel Heyman will distill the discussion into a working draft ordinance for the committee to review at its next meeting. Mr. Stierwalt will send a poll to the committee to find a date for the next meeting, sometime in June/July.

- V. **Adjournment:** the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.