



Meeting Name: Planning & Zoning Board Meeting

Meeting Date: October 7, 2024

Prepared By: Stephen Mayer

Item Title: Discussion on Town of Juno Beach Code, Article IV, Division 7, Section 34-1084, entitled “Landscaping Requirements”.

DISCUSSION:

At the December 12, 2022, Planning & Zoning Board meeting the Board discussed the Town’s Landscaping Requirements per code section 34-1084. The Board gave consensus to recommend that the entirety of Section 34-1084 of the Town Code of Ordinance, “Landscape Requirements” be reviewed by an expert in code writing who knows landscape planning to propose language to the Town Council. At the May 8, 2024, Town Council meeting, Council gave consensus to have a discussion on other towns’ landscaping requirements.

Staff reviewed landscaping code benchmarks for Palm Beach Gardens, North Palm Beach, Tequesta, Palm Beach and Jupiter. However, the instruction to propose language for landscape requirements is too broad to know which specific elements or topics to focus on by comparison. Staff has assembled eleven elements of our research of landscape code that could be assessed. Before benchmarking an exhaustive evaluation of entire landscape codes, staff would like the Planning and Zoning Board to identify which elements or topics they would like to address or prioritize with this code review.

Elements of Landscaping Code:

One of the goals of this discussion item is to request the Planning and Zoning Board add any elements or topics that staff should focus on and research. Further, the Planning and Zoning Board is encouraged to limit the scope of the research by removing any elements or topics that are not recommended to be discussed further.

Staff will provide a brief description of each of the eleven elements of landscaping, and how the Town’s Code addresses the element. Please see Attachment 1 for the existing Town of Juno Beach Code, Article IV, Division 7, and Attachment 2 for the table summary of how the code addresses each of the eleven elements below:

1. ***Minimum Development Standards.*** Some common requirements include definitions of landscaping, terms using landscaping and other landscaping terms, minimum open space,

minimum landscape coverage, minimum landscape points (in a point scale system), plant size and height, understory and ground cover plant coverage and distribution, plant materials, specimen trees, preferred species or recommended plant lists, screening height, buffer width and opacity, nuisance/invasive vegetation, diversity, and native vegetation minimum.

2. ***Landscape Plan Requirements.*** Whether a landscape plan, signed and sealed by a landscape architect registered by the state, drawn to scale and clearly delineating the existing and proposed plants are required for large projects, single-family homes, and residential lots within a Planned Unit Development. Also outlines the amendment process to landscape plans.
3. ***Landscaping Design Principles (include composition for aesthetic and shade).*** This section would provide general direction and criteria for the evaluation of the quality of landscape design, for example: require a minimum number or coverage of canopy trees to enhance the shade and environmental quality, encouragement of ornamental trees and understory trees to enhance the color, form and texture. How could landscaping promote greater compatibility with the coastal habitat and encourage the use of native and drought resistant plants. It would also address the use equivalency of palm trees toward shade tree requirements.
4. ***Preservation and Conservation Areas.*** Preservation and conservation areas and tracks can provide a natural corridor for wildlife and biodiversity and provide residents with recreational and quality of life opportunities. These areas also provide ecosystems with air purification, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, and soil retention. How much land should be utilized for preservation or conservation areas? Staff notes that approximately 44% of the Town are Environmental Sensitive Lands. But should a portion of a major project be dedicated to preservation and conservation areas? How will common space for preservation and conservation areas within major projects be maintained and managed? Where should they be located and what are the regulations protecting those spaces?
5. ***Sustainability Efforts.*** Sustainable landscape design includes a variety of principles and practices that help create a functional, thriving and ecologically friendly environment, minimizing site disturbances, including the use of sustainable materials, water conservation, Florida friendly landscape principals/ xeriscape, use of native vegetation requirements, invasive species removal requirements, and mandatory littoral planting zones.
6. ***Existing Tree Protection.*** Landscaping codes include requirements for removal, relocation, replacement and mitigation of existing trees during development. Aggressive tree protection may also include incentives, such as a payment in lieu of tree replacement and tree mitigation funds to be utilized toward new tree planting by the Town.
7. ***Perimeter and Interior Landscaping Requirements.*** Exterior landscaping requirements include landscape buffers between uses, street frontage treatments and addresses berms, fences and walls in buffers. Requirements include tree spacing, tree selection, height, location of buffer zones, and replacement widths of trees within buffer zones. Interior landscaping includes landscape requirements within parking areas, parking areas and other nuisance uses and streets and adjacent uses, as well as planters and plantings around the foundation of a building. Requirements may also provide landscaping protection from vehicular damage, curbing, wheel stops, etc.

8. ***City-wide Roadway Beautification and Street Tree Plan.*** These efforts can include development fees for median landscaping, beautification grant funding for US1 and neighborhood streets, and the development of a preferred landscaping palette or recommended plant lists. Street tree palettes or recommended plant lists are a selection of trees selected for their survivability, drought tolerance, ease of maintenance, and appearance.
9. ***Screening Standards.*** This could include screening of equipment, loading zones, outdoor storage areas, etc.), regulations on sight visibility and obstructions (site triangles, public safety hazards, etc.) and language dealing with landscaping requirements in conflict with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or lighting.
10. ***Installation and Maintenance of Landscaping*** includes requirements for root barriers, the timing of installation, the use of Best Management Practices and other protective measures, marking and fencing during construction. It can include methods for pruning, regulations for irrigation system requirements, and use of Florida Friendly fertilizer.
11. ***Stabilization Requirements and Swales.*** They can include requirements to help erosion and runoff, and to ensure plants establish themselves quickly. This may include soil surveys, soil preparation, mulch, landscape fabrics, retaining walls or terracing, permanent ground cover, and shrubs and hedges. This could also include the encouragement of bioswales, allowing landscaping in detention areas and encouragement of French drains. Finally, this may also provide regulations on hardscape and non-living (Artificial) landscape materials.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Board review the information as presented and provide staff with directions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Division 7, Landscaping Requirements, Town of Juno Beach

Attachment 2 – Table - Benchmarking Landscape Elements – Juno Beach