



**CITY OF LABELLE, FLORIDA**  
**Staff Report**  
**for**  
**725 W. Hickpochee Avenue**  
**Tree Removal Permit**

**TYPE OF CASE:** Tree Removal Permit Requiring City Commission Approval

**STAFF REVIEWER:** Patty Kulak

**DATE:** January 9, 2025

**APPLICANT:** Life Ministries of LaBelle, Inc.

**AGENT:** Jorge D. Rodriguez

**REQUEST:** Removal of one (1) significant oak tree from the subject property located at 725 W. Hickpochee Avenue to preserve the building integrity and allow for expansion of the building, subject to on-site mitigation in accordance with LDC Section 4-80

**LOCATION:** 725 W. Hickpochee Avenue

**PROPERTY SIZE:** 1.74+/-acres

**STAFF NARRATIVE:**

The applicant proposes the removal of one oak tree, specifically a water oak, with a total diameter of 36" DBH (Diameter at Breast Height). The City has conditioned approval of this request upon the applicant replanting 36 inches of live oak trees on-site in accordance with the minimum specifications outlined in the Land Development Code.

The tree proposed for removal is located along the southern edge of the church sanctuary. The applicant has stated that its branches extend over the sanctuary roof, causing significant issues due to the accumulation of leaves and branches. This debris has led to roof deterioration and rust, necessitating previous roof replacements.

The tree is situated approximately four feet from the south end of the sanctuary. The applicant has expressed concerns about potential structural damage to the building's foundation caused by root growth. Furthermore, the tree's location conflicts with the church's plans to expand the facility to the south end of the sanctuary.

LDC provisions for the protection of significant oak trees allow for their removal, subject to the replanting requirements outlined in LDC Section 4-80.16.5, which state:

“The replacement Live Oak tree must be at minimum: ten (10) feet in height, contain a four (4) foot spread, and have four (4) inch caliper, DBH, at time of planting. All significant oak tree(s) approved for removal shall be replaced on a DBH inch for DBH inch basis.”

To mitigate the removal, the applicant has agreed to replanting replacement trees along the east and south property boundaries, consistent with the City of LaBelle’s requirements. The replacement trees will be a Live Oak per the LDC.

Staff finds the request consistent with the LDC, provided the applicant complies with the requirement to replant a total of 36 inches of live oak trees on-site, meeting the minimum specifications outlined in LDC Section 4-80.16.5.

**SUGGESTED MOTION(S)**

**APPROVAL:**

I make a motion to approve the proposed tree removal permit, subject to replanting of 36 inches of live oaks trees on-site, meeting the minimum size specifications of the Land Development Code.

**DENIAL:**

I make a motion to deny the proposed tree removal permit.

The request does not meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

- 1) .... Why?

**EXHIBIT A  
SIGNIFICANT OAK TREE LOCATION**



Date of Drawing: 12/2/2024  
Scale: 1" = 72.5'  
Existing tree: Water Oak;  
diameter = 36 inches  
Plan Preparer: Jorge Rodriguez