



The Lowcountry's Hometown

PO Box 700 | Moncks Corner, SC 29461 | 843.719.7900 | monckscornersc.gov

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Justin Westbrook, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Tree Removal Request (TR-25-01) – 1111 Quenby
DATE: June 24, 2025

Background: The applicant, Elvis Black, has applied for a Tree Removal Request (TR-25-01) for three (3) **Grand Trees** located at 1111 Quenby Ln. A **Grand Tree** is defined as,

“any tree having a diameter at breast height (DBH) of twenty-four (24) inches or larger”.

Staff has visited the property to find a single trunk which splits into three (3) large trees; two (2) Live Oak trees in excess of twenty-seven inches (27”) and a Live Oak tree in excess of thirty-one inches (31”). The applicant reached out to Staff to express their desire to seek a permit to remove all three (3) trees. According to the application, the Live Oak trees are approximately eight feet (8’) from the existing home, with one protruding over the home. The applicant has stated multiple tree services recommend having the Live Oak trees removed before any damage is caused to the house.

One certified Arborist prepared a letter stating that the three Live Oaks were “hazardous” and “high-risk”. These trees also were identified as “threatening the residence as well as its inhabitants”. The applicant provided pictures of what appears to be the Live Oak tree closest to the structure jutting upon the applicant’s home, with proximity and potential damage to the home as their greatest concern. The Arborist’s Letter identifies the tree’s significant age, weakened outer bark, and appearance of rot and decay. The Arborist saw evidence of damage to the home “incurred by the aggressive and expanding anchor roots” and recommended the tree as a “potential candidate for removal” with an “inevitable demise”, well beyond the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) standard for maximum canopy reduction recommended.

The applicant has expressed no desire to mitigate the three (3) Live Oak trees, and is seeking to remove without mitigation due to imminent safety hazard to the nearby home.

Procedural Issues: Per the Town’s Code of Ordinance (Article III, Chapter 16), grand trees may be removed without mitigation under the following circumstances:

- A. Tree(s) is/are dead.

- B. Tree(s) which pose(s) an imminent safety hazard to nearby buildings, persons, utility lines or vehicular traffic.
- C. Trees which are located in the footprint of a proposed building or drive which cannot be reasonably relocated.
- D. Trees which are being cut as a commercial timber operation in accordance with the South Carolina Right to Practice Forestry Act. The Town requests but does not require that a 50-foot wide perimeter buffer of all existing trees be maintained in an undisturbed manner. Trees grown specifically for sale by commercial nurseries are exempt from the provisions of this article with respect to their removal from the commercial site upon which they are grown.
- E. Protected trees required to be removed to carry out a permitted wetland alteration and/or mitigation plan approved by the Army Corps of Engineers or South Carolina Office of Coastal Resource Management are exempt from the provisions of this article.
- F. Removal because of density or interference with the development of other trees.
- G. Removal of pine trees, unless permit is for multiple trees in which removal would constitute clear-cutting.
- H. Trees identified by the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council Non-Native Plant Species List.

Staff Analysis: Staff was able to attempt a visual inspection of the trees, and believe the Live Oak tree closest to the applicant's house does poses an imminent safety hazard to the existing structure. The applicant has provided several pictures to support this claim, and the Arborist's letter expound upon these claims. The certified Arborist does note that the trees utilize one stump at the base, which further weakens the other two, indicating the removal of the tree closes to the house may make the other two (2) more unstable, specifically as all three (3) suffer from the same health. Staff does not believe the trees are in the footprint of a proposed structure, part of a commercial timber operation, interfered with development of other trees, or on the non-native plant species list.

Staff Recommendation: Staff requests the Planning Commission consider the application to remove the three (3) Live Oak trees, supported by the Arborist's Letter with compelling evidence for "imminent safety hazard". Coupled with Staff's site visit, we are in agreement with the Arborist's Letter and recommend the Planning Commission approve the request to remove without mitigation for the three (3) large Live Oak trees.

Attachments: *Application (20250502)*
 Staff Pictures (20250502)
 Arborist's Letter (20250509)
 Applicant's Request (20250502)
 Applicant's Pictures (20250502)