

**City Council of the City of Greenville  
Work Session**

**Monday, August 28, 2023  
3:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Location:  
Greenville City Hall, 206 S. Main Street**

**MINUTES**

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Knox White and Councilmembers John M. DeWorken, Lillian B. Flemming, Kenneth C. Gibson, Russell H. Stall, and Dorothy H. Dowe;  
Absent: Wil Brasington

CITY STAFF: City Manager Shannon Lavrin; City Attorney Leigh B. Paoletti; City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor White called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

**Tree Ordinance Update**

City Manager Shannon Lavrin introduced the agenda item and stated the purpose of discussion is to provide an update on the tree ordinance and the tree fund and to receive feedback in moving forward.

Principal Landscape Architect Edward Kinney shared information regarding the history of tree ordinance including concerns around 2019 with the reduction of tree canopy, evaluation in preserving the trees, and the development and approval of the current tree ordinance. Mr. Kinney advised that the ordinance established new planting requirements, established mitigation components for the removal of some trees, established a tree fund with caveats on spending, and established a mandatory review period in 2023.

Mr. Kinney referred to recent changes implemented in the Development Code that were passed in June affecting the tree ordinance, including streamlining, allowing for fee reductions for affordable housing projects, adding landscape installations for affordable housing projects as an acceptable expenditure of the tree fund, and adding on after-the-fact violations for retroactive tree fees.

Ms. Lavrin stated that following the presentation today, the City will communicate reminders to citizens to contact the City for assistance with tree questions. Ms. Lavrin advised that an additional employee has been added to assist with code enforcement.

Mr. Kinney referred to the tree fund and explained how the fund is used. Mr. Kinney stated an additional component has been added to allow for a percentage of new tree and landscape material and for installation costs for affordable housing developments. Ms. Lavrin advised that this additional component is huge and important to the affordable housing community.

Mr. Kinney provided an overview of the fund balance over the past three years and referred to revenues. Mr. Kinney stated that most individuals are choosing to pay a fee in lieu versus replanting trees. Mr. Kinney shared information regarding the distribution of a total of 2,569 tree plantings and giveaways over the past eight months. Mr. Kinney stated the City has increased the number of trees in new developments from 1 tree per 3,000 square feet to 1 tree per 2,000

square feet. Mr. Kinney also stated the target is 40% percent and that the City is currently at 35% percent.

Urban Forester Drew Smith provided suggestions for future park projects and commented on the tree plan which includes work in the Central Business District, inventory in special emphasis neighborhoods, creating a new tree canopy study, partnering with Trees Upstate for plantings in special emphasis neighborhoods, potential purchase of property to allow for planting trees, future tree giveaways, and assessing treatment. Mr. Smith and Mr. Kinney responded to questions regarding the process of determining the type of trees planted in rights of way below power lines.

Ms. Lavrin asked for feedback regarding the information presented. Councilmember Stall suggested encouraging individuals to plant trees instead of paying a fee. Councilmember Gibson responded the only way to encourage replanting may be to raise the fee or create classifications of fees for commercial properties and residential properties. Councilmember Dowe suggested tying the maximum cap to the size of a new home being built. Following discussions regarding neighborhoods, Ms. Lavrin suggested encouraging neighborhoods to contact the City for planting opportunities in their areas.

Ms. Lavrin asked if Council is supportive of the affordable housing component and land purchases for planting. With no opposition, Ms. Lavrin advised that staff will continue to address land purchases, affordable housing, long term canopy maintenance, special emphasis neighborhoods, and improving the ordinance.

#### **Motion - Executive Session**

During the open Work Session, Mayor White asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Leigh Paoletti recommended going into executive session under S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2) on the following (a) matters related to the governance of the Zoo, (b) the Greenville Housing Fund bond issuance, and (c) update on potential contract involving the location of City Hall and under (a)(1) appointments to boards and commissions.

Councilmember Flemming moved, seconded by Councilmember DeWorken, to go into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Flemming moved, seconded by Councilmember Gibson, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS  
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on August 25, 2023