

**MINUTES
TREE BOARD
May 20, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

Dan Bullock called the virtual meeting to order at 6:05 pm on May 20, 2021.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members Present: Dan Bullock, Chair
 Zach Hendrix, Member
 Jo Anne Teeple, Member
 Lisa Paige, Member
 Britni Johnson, Member

Town Staff Present: Mike Callas, Town of Carbondale Staff Liaison
 Kae McDonald, Boards and Commissions Clerk

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Britni ***moved*** to approve the March 2021 Tree Board minutes. Zach ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

There was a short discussion about an email from Genevieve Villamizar concerning a replacement tree as well as voicing her concerns about the February 2021 agenda topic discussing procedures for the TOC receiving certified landscape plans and registering certified landscape architects. Mike responded to her concerns via email. He noted that the tree she was referring to was planted in Nuche Park and died after an irrigation malfunction; the original Burr Oak was replaced with an Amur Chokecherry because Burr Oaks were not available at the time. Mike told the board members that he had conveyed his perspective on the subject and reassured Genevieve that the protocols were specifically to address deficiencies in landscape plans received for major plan reviews and were not intended to take work away from landscape designers hired by homeowners.

Jo Anne preferred to put the topic on next month's agenda for a more thorough discussion.

Dan pointed out that the Tree Ordinance defines the Tree Board's purview and the UDC specifically states what is expected. He added that the Tree Board has no jurisdiction outside the public right-of-way.

Jo Anne noted that the Tree Board is acting in the interests of the TOC and reiterated Dan's point that the board is specifically concerned with the landscape in the TOC's right-of-way.

HAVING RESIDENTS PAY FOR TREE REMOVALS AND REPLACEMENTS WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

Mike noted that he is often approached by community members asking for trees to be removed for a variety of reasons. Given his limited budget of \$25,000.00 he only has enough money to pay for four or five removals per year and would like to see more investment on the part of the homeowners if they want a healthy tree removed. Mike has discussed the topic with the Town Manager and Director of Public Works, and they agreed that if the tree is hazardous or dead/dying, the Town would pay for the costs of removal and replacement, in most other circumstances the property owner will be required to pay for both the removal and replacement.

Questions/Comments:

Jo Anne asked Mike to clarify whether healthy trees are being targeted for removal for solar panel installation and/or aesthetics.

Mike concurred with Jo Anne's assessment and noted that trees can provide just as much energy savings as solar panels. He indicated that a 25-minute conversation with a local property owner prompted his discussion with the Town Manager and Director of Public Works.

Britni asked if it was written into the code that property owners are responsible for the right-of-way.

Mike responded that it was not. He added that he is willing to take care of the trees, it is the cost of the removals that has him concerned.

Lisa asked if there was a process for putting trees into a queue for removal.

Mike responded that public outreach is part of his job and he is happy to talk with property owners. He noted that a tree's placement in the queue is based on the health of the tree or if it is an imminent hazard.

Zach pointed out that the policy has been cleared by the Town Manager. He added that it seems to be a clear-cut policy and will be easy to adhere to.

Jo Anne asked what happens if a tree in the public right-of-way is cut down without prior approval.

Mike responded that it is a code violation and punitive measures can be taken. He thought that that scenario was unlikely to happen and pointed out that property owners are primarily targeting elm trees. He added that despite some of the issues with this kind of tree, they do provide benefits. He went on to say that there are 5,400 trees in town and the budget and manpower limit what can be done.

Lisa asked if Mike felt like he was being forced into something.

Mike responded that there are a few vocal property owners, but if he can provide some concessions, it might appease them.

Britni suggested posting a "Hazardous Tree" checklist on the webpage and if a tree satisfies those conditions, the property owner could petition for a tree's removal.

Mike pointed out that the way the hazardous tree language is written--if it has a target, it is a hazard--many mature trees would fall into the hazardous tree category and he would prefer to steer clear of that language.

Zach asked if Mike had a checklist for viable tree removal that the TOC pays for.

Mike replied that he has the language, but it is up to the Town Manager and the Board of Trustees to put into the Unified Development Code.

Dan pointed out that the Director of Public Works has the final approval.

Lisa asked if there was a way for property owners to determine whether they should approach the TOC about tree removal.

Mike responded that he has all the protocols in place. He was willing to bring inquiries to the board members in certain situations.

Dan pointed out that the Tree Board was established to review all things related to trees.

Lisa asked for a poll of the Tree Board members to see how they wanted to move forward:

- Zach trusted Mike to make those decisions and bring items of concern to the Tree Board when deemed necessary,
- Britni agreed with Zach and suggested an appeal process if property owners disagree with the decision,
- Jo Anne noted that this has been done before—Aspen Tree Service monitors the trees in Sopris Park. She suggested hiring a third party for an independent assessment, but wondered who would pay for the assessment,
- Lisa communicated to Mike that the Tree Board supported his decisions. She suggested that if it is an area of little or no precedent, that would be the time to bring it to the Tree Board,
- Dan noted that there are problems with enforcement that may need to be addressed in the future.

Motion Passed: Zach *moved* that the Tree Board supports the Town Arborist' decision-making protocol concerning property owner requests for tree removals and replacements within the right-of-way. Britni *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

MICHAEL'S TREE REPORT

Dan suggested several trees along Main Street between Highway 133 and 8th Street that might be appropriate for the Arbor Day celebration and suggested adding that discussion to the next Tree Board meeting agenda.

Zach asked if a private sector program for replacing trees could be an agenda topic at an upcoming Tree Board meeting. Mike thought this topic was well-suited to the Backyard Tree Program that the Tree Board used to sponsor, and it might be possible to re-implement the program.

Jo Anne asked if it would be possible to schedule a tree walk-about for the next meeting, possibly along Main Street between Highway 133 and 8th Street.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dan would like to resign as Chair of the Tree Board and asked if anyone was interested in taking on that role. Lisa and Zach agreed to move into the role of Co-Chairs.

ADJOURNMENT

The May 20, 2021, regular meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled on June 17, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald
Town of Carbondale
Boards and Commissions Clerk