



**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes  
April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:00 PM**

**I. Call to Order-Mayor Monson**

A regular Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Mayor Monson at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall 5335 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Zephyrhills FL 33542.

**II. Roll Call-Carlos Maldonado**

Commission members present: Mayor Monson, Dr. Randy Stovall, David Armstrong, Thomas Vanater (Absent), Tracy Sullivan, Beth Aker (Absent), Dr. Christa Remington, Ellen Taylor, Clyde Bracknell.

**III. Invocation-Dr. Christa Remington**

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

**1.Consent Items**

**1.1 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

The minutes were motioned for approval by all board members.

**2.Business Items**

No business items were on the agenda

**3. Other Items**

**3.1 Landscape/Tree Ordinance LDC Section 7.06.00; Discussion for updating the City's Land Development Code.**

The discussion was led by Todd Vandenberg; the topic was regarding updating the city's landscape code section 7.06.00. Currently the city's Storage Facility Land Development Code has been updated and approved through the city council this year. This code under review is being updated in certain sections only. The city staff were asked to look into an assessment for the tree code which led staff to perform due diligence identifying sections that required a change and further review for better clarification. Safety Harbors landscape/tree land development code was reviewed and used as an example for the possible changes. The city's consultant recommended using Safety Harbor as an example, a copy of their code was included in the packet for the board members to review. Some of the main items that were looked at are: tree/removal/quantities, enforcement, water conservation tree



mitigation/replanting. Possible amendments could be proposed to certain sections that require updating. This discussion was only for the board's input and suggestions for possible improvements. A few questions for sections 7.06.01 and 7.06.02 were brought up and will require better clarification on topics such as protected trees classification and size issues and suggestions on defining what the exempt trees are. Tree Removal Permitting was reviewed, main questions and updates for tree removal permitting included residential possibly requiring a tree permit in the future, tree permit applications possibly needing to be approved by the city manager, including a fee for non-commercial properties such as a residential tree permit charging \$25 for the application fee. Protected trees were discussed and changes to the protected tree section was recommended. This section is listing cypress trees being protected, however there is numerous categories of cypress trees so this will need to have the wording changed for better clarification. A more thorough review for new residential developments will need to be included for tree mitigation/removal and having the applicants provide an arborist report including a tree condition rating for all trees and a justification statement for proposed removals. Suggestions of having the staff conduct an on-site inspection along with being able to withhold the tree removal permit until a site plan approval is granted. Section in question 7.06.04 Tree Removal Guidelines was a topic of discussion the section discusses percentage and sizes of trees that are allowed to be removed, this needs better clarification and improvement and approval through council will be required to make the change to the section of the code. A couple of projects were mentioned that had certain tree removal guideline issues as an example. Going forward via the pre-application process the tree removal/mitigation will need to be looked at more thoroughly along with their landscape engineer and conduct a site visit. Suggest having tree removal permits that are issued expiring within 3 months of the issue date. A new permit application will be required for any removal after the expiration date. Invasive species was brought up by a board member and having this section updated as well and including a reason why they are listed in the code. The change could benefit properties that have lots of invasive trees being able to clear them from the property without being penalized so a change to this category could be reviewed more thoroughly. Turf was mentioned, Bahia grass was discussed as an option for turfs that could preserve water better and should be included in the new code. Board members also made comments on the updates complying with the water star program and having input from the Water Management District to make sure there is compliance for water preservation. New developments also need to have implementation of certain landscaping being proposed to help with the updated code and avoid issues once the subdivisions implement HOA's. Also



trying to have HOA's implement certain turf requirements into their agreement, however certain laws with HOA's won't need to comply with city regulations. Suggestions to have new subdivisions put in lines for reclaim water usage were mentioned in the discussion. Safety Harbor Section 154.05 Screening was discussed and important factors that could be implemented for the city's code were discussed certain examples mentioned were; must provide screening between potentially incompatible uses in accordance with the requirements herein, screening shall have 1 or more: minimum 8ft wide buffer strips , protected trees every 25 ft and continuous screen maintained, buffer sizes along with types of plants that are permitted within the buffer. Another section from Safety Harbor was 154.06 mentioning drainage and open spaces to prevent erosion sand infiltration into the public drainage system, and to permit water to permeate into the ground. Techniques for tree preservation were mentioned such as installation of drain tiles, dry well construction, terracing, retaining walls, a reduction in grade change. Section (D) of the code mentioned natural areas shall be protected during construction by silt barriers, solid or ribboned barricades. Possible changes for the cities code could reflect Safety Harbors. Tree/Landscape section will need to be reviewed further by the city staff. Most of the board members agreed with using Safety Harbors Tree ordinance code as an example for future updates to the city's land development code. Invasion trees will need to be changed with better clarification to identify them better. The landscape buffer section was discussed; plans being submitted with trees and buffers will need a minimum 3' inch caliper trunk. Larger developments usually require smaller caliper trees and could be accepted. Palm Trees require (3) trees to be planted if they're proposed on the development. Height is a concern for Palm trees species consider some grow really tall and are hard to maintain. Industrial properties landscaping was discussed briefly, and they require landscape/buffering if neighboring residential areas. Topics on updating tree violations were mentioned, and an example was given if Grand trees measuring in 24' is removed without following proper procedures or permitted a \$5,000 fine could be given and violator will be taken to court by Code Enforcement. The average number of trees per acreage was mentioned and it starts at 6" trees required to be planted. Safety Harbors is 4" per acreage requirements and this is not for exempt trees. Developers are usually notified prior to any new development and given the number of trees that are allowed to be removed based on their proposed acreage. The number of trees allowed to be removed mentioned in the table will be a point of discussion for future meetings. A power point was presented towards the end and touched base on the sections mentioned earlier. This item was mainly to get the Planning Commissions input and will



# Zephyrhills

need to be brought back to get the final amendments approved by the city council. No additional comments were made.

**Adjourn.**



## City of Zephyrhills

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