

L1Notes from Meeting 6 of the Landscape Ordinance Committee

August 3, 2020

Present were: Gerry Alfano, Judson Clinton, Deniece Conway, Debby Davis, Terri Jones, Keith Francies, Steve Galanti, Tim Knowles, Christina Larson, Joel Landau, Shane Messer, Nick Piornack, Anna Reaves, Mark Reaves, Dabney Sanders, Walker Sanders, Tori Small, Jeff Sovich, Virginia Spillman, Juhann Waller

Teresa Lockamy serving as facilitator, welcomed attendees and reminded them of the charter for conduct during the meeting, and the protocols for participating in Zoom meetings. She then introduced Elizabeth Link to present the first topic of discussion, the approval of amendments to the ordinance regarding required parking lot tree islands in regards to size, spacing and quantity.

The proposed amendments had been revised to include changes discussed in the previous meeting. Proposed minimum island size for 1 tree was 274 s.f. with a minimum width of 8', and number required was 1 per 10 parking spaces. Proposed minimum island size for 3 trees was 685 s.f. Soil de-compaction and preparation requirements for parking lot islands had also been added.

Tim Knowles suggested that an additional square footage amount should be added for situations where more than 3 trees are proposed. Using the calculation of square footage for 3 trees, he suggested using the additional 230 s.f. for each additional tree. It was agreed that this should be added to the table.

Mr. Knowles also asked about requiring the soil de-compaction and amendment notes on the grading plan. Mark Reaves commented that plan notes are often not read, and that the more places that they are placed on the plan the more likely they will be seen.

Tori Small commented that she is concerned about the timing of the ordinance change to require larger islands and any ordinance change to lower parking minimums, and whether lowering the minimums would actually happen. Ms. Link showed the memo to the Planning Director recommending a reduction in parking spaces, which had been amended based on the last meeting to request a reduction of 15%. She said that she had run the memo by the Planning Director before the meeting and that the Director had said reducing parking is something that is on the department's to-do list, and is in line with other goals of the Comprehensive Plan and Sustainability Plan, but that no timeline had been set for accomplishing it. Ms. Small noted that it would be preferable to have the two ordinance changes take place at the same time in order to accomplish the goal of offsetting the increase in island size with decrease in parking lot size. Ms. Link then showed a list compiling TRC plans for development projects submitted since March 1. Of 37 plans submitted, 28 plans, or 76%, had proposed a larger number of parking spaces than required. She also noted that the City has means of requesting reductions under certain circumstances. Ms. Small pointed out that for the plans that had only requested a few extra parking spaces, the larger islands might be the difference between them having those spaces or not.

Mr. Landau suggested that there might be additional tools other than those mentioned in the soil de-compaction notes, and that something should be added to cover that possibility. Ms. Link agreed that the wording should be revised.

Dabney Sanders noted that setting parking maximums might be as important as setting minimums.

The group then discussed the issue of trees being required in islands as opposed to trees allowed along the edge of parking lots. Mr. Knowles noted that trees along the perimeter usually do better than ones in islands, and proposed that we allow a certain percentage of trees along the edge to count for the required number. The group discussed allowing a percentage of required trees to be in the edges, within a certain distance of the edge of pavement, and not on the north side of the parking lot.

Judson Clinton noted that section 30-10-2.7 regarding Tree Conservation and Parking lots already has allowances for Tree Conservation trees within 8' of a parking lot to be used for credit for parking lot trees and stipulation that trees can't be used for credit for both parking lot trees and buffer yard trees.

Anna Reaves noted that the ordinance can't control every aspect of development, but that having the option to put trees adjacent to the parking lot would be desirable. Steve Galanti suggested that since we are increasing the island size by 15% that allowing 15% of the required trees to be adjacent would be reasonable. After further discussion about the wording of the amendments, the group agreed that the 15% was workable and that revisions discussed should be incorporated into the amendment and brought before the group at the next meeting. Ms. Lockamy asked if there were other comments or dissent, and there was none.

The group then reviewed the proposed amendment for the required distance of a light pole to a tree. Ms. Small noted that the ordinance should state the distance to a "required" tree. Mr. Knowles thought distance might be a function of the tree species and type, referencing fastigiated and upright species as being narrower. Mr. Clinton noted that the ordinance should reference canopy trees, as the types mentioned were not canopy trees. After further discussion it was proposed that the distances should be 20' from a light pole and 12' from a pedestrian light. Ms. Lockamy asked for agreement from the group to proceed with the amendment, and received a positive response from most of the group. Ms. Lockamy asked if there were any other comments or dissent, and received none.

The group then returned to the Memorandum to the Planning Director, and after brief discussion agreed to move forward with sending the memo to the Director.

The discussion then turned to the Approved Plant List, and the Sub-committee working on the list was asked to also look at developing a list of trees to be used for parking lot trees, which they agreed to do.

It was then noted that the next meeting would be on August 17th, and that the meeting after that would be on September 21. Ms. Lockamy asked for any other comments or thoughts, and there being none, the meeting was brought to an end.