

NOTES FROM MEETING 7 of the LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, August 19, 2020

Present were : *Gerry Alfano, Kimberly Barb, Judson Clinton, Deniece Conway, Debby Davis, Terri Jones, Steve Galanti, Sarah Healy, Tim Knowles, Marty Kotis, Christina Larson, Joel Landau, Shane Messer, Nick Piornack, Anna Reaves, Mark Reaves, Walker Sanders, Judy Stalder, Jeff Sovich, and Juhann Waller*

The meeting began as Facilitator Teresa Lockamy welcomed everyone and reviewed the meeting protocols. She went over the agenda for the meeting, which included further discussion of amendments regarding size and soil volume of parking lot tree islands, soil amendments in islands, and distances between light poles and required trees. The agenda also included approval of the landscape manual language changes, and discussion of next possible topic. She then introduced Elizabeth Link to present the revised amendments.

Ms. Link went over the previously discussed changes to the number of parking lot trees required, island size, and the new revisions based on last meeting's discussion, to provide square footage requirements for medians that would hold more than 4 trees, and to allow 15% of parking lot trees to be located adjacent to the parking lot. Ms. Link noted that after further discussion among staff it was decided to allow the 15% through a Type 1 Modification, as this would allow greater flexibility to staff reviewing the plans.

Ms. Link also went over the ordinance wording and notes to be added to the Landscape manual for the requirement of soil de-compaction in tree islands, and asked for responses.

Judy Stalder noted that she had sent the materials received out to the TREBIC membership when she received them, but had not gotten much response, which she attributed to the short time between when they were received (Thursday) and the meeting the following Monday, so that she would not be able to endorse the content until after she had received further input from her members. Ms. Stalder said that members wanted to know how the additional parking lot tree requirements would affect their cost, and were working to gather that information.

Ms. Lockamy then asked for a test of consensus on the changes. Marty Kotis, attending by phone, then asked if he might give input, and was asked to proceed. Mr. Kotis agreed with Ms. Stalder that understanding how the cost of the changes would affect them was important. He suggested that TREBIC could put together some figures. Wanted an "optional benefit" rather than a requirement.

Tim Knowles noted he had experience estimating landscaping, and gave a possible price for a 200 car parking lot. Mr. Kotis said he was interested in the increase in space requirements. Ms. Stalder noted that the increased space would also include additional buffer yards around the space. Further discussion regarding the size increase included remarks from Mr. Kotis and Ms. Stalder that parking lot sizes are frequently generated from the requirements of the tenants and not from the municipal requirements. Some conjecture of costs followed. Mr. Knowles also noted that under the new language

extra trees might also be allowed adjacent to the parking lot, which would not impact the size of the parking lot.

Judson Clinton noted that trees are an amenity whose value appreciates as time goes on and that factor should be taken into consideration when figuring the finances.

Ms. Lockamy then stated the items that need to have additional information before Ms. Stalder and Mr. Kotis could consider the changes would be getting the financial impact of ordinance change and feedback from TREBIC, and understanding what total impact of changes would be. This was agreed upon by Ms. Stalder.

Mr. Kotis asked about substituting a grove of trees for the required parking lot trees. Ms. Link noted that a group of trees not within the parking lot would not achieve the shade and cooling effects that are the desired effect of spacing parking lot tree islands through the parking lot.

Additional discussion covered questions about the Type 1 Modification process. Mr. Kotis and Ms. Stalder expressed concern that allowing staff discretion over these decisions could result in an abuse of power.

Ms. Lockamy asked Ms. Stalder what the timeline might be for getting the information from her members that she wants to have, and it was agreed that within a couple of weeks Ms. Stalder should be able to get the information to Ms. Link.

The next item of discussion was the ordinance requirement for distance from light poles to required trees. The discussion included an agreement to provide an edit to specify that the distance was from required canopy trees and not from understory trees, and a change to specify the type of lighting subject to the requirement, to specifically eliminate decorative lighting.

The proposed changes to the Landscape Manual were the next matter of discussion. Ms. Link presented the language that would be added to require notes regarding de-compaction requirements on the Landscape plan and the Grading plan. During discussion Mr. Knowles noted that the soil de-compaction requirements were a compromise in the discussion about island size, substituting better soil for an even larger island. There were no objections to the Manual changes, and it was noted that these would only be instituted when the ordinance changes requiring soil de-compaction take place.

The group then discussed which subject to undertake next, whether adding landscaping requirements to single family residential or to the Central Business district, neither of which currently have requirements for Tree Conservation or Landscaping. The majority of the group that expressed an opinion was for taking up single-family landscaping. Ms. Lockamy asked for any dissent to single family, and there was none. With that agreed upon, the meeting was brought to an end.