

## **NOTES FROM MEETING 15 OF LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE – MAY 5, 2021**

Present were : *Gerry Alfano, Allen Buansi, Judson Clinton, Debby Davis, Vicki Foust, Sarah Healy, Joel Landau, Christina Larson, Elizabeth Link, Nick Piornak, Mark Reaves, Dabney Sanders, Walker Sanders, Tori Small, Jeff Sovich, Judy Stalder, Zach Strickland, Juhann Waller.*

Facilitator Teresa Lockamy opened the meeting with greetings for the attendees, and reviewed the agenda. The first item was a review of Section 30-10-3 of the Land Development Ordinance, “Urban Landscaping Requirements”, which had been edited to include the CB district in applicable districts, and to include requirements for planting street trees and landscape buffers for parking lots, and which had been the topic of discussion at the previous meeting. Elizabeth Link presented the proposed ordinance, which had been revised to include some suggestions that were provided in the previous meeting. The revisions.

Ms. Link showed the zoning map, reminding the participants that the changes will be applicable to the CB zoning and would largely affect only the CB district. She showed that the requirement for tree diversity and that the tree well specifications had been moved within section 30-10-3.2, Pedestrian Landscaping, to make both items applicable to all of the districts referenced – RM-40, MU-H, MU-M, TN, C-N, and CB.

She then noted several adjustments that had been made based on her conversations with the Director of Transportation, which included adding a clarification that, in the case of an existing streetscape plan, the applicant would be responsible for “linear elements and plantings” of the streetscape – i.e. curb and gutter, tree wells, and plants, and would not include site furnishings or similar items that might occur on the plan. Changes also included a stipulation in the section on fee-in-lieu that the applicant must provide an Engineer’s sealed estimate of costs. Tori Small noted that she would probably just use a contractor’s estimate, and questioned if other professionals shouldn’t be included, such as Architects or Landscape Architects, or even contractors. Juhann Waller suggested the term “registered design professional” be used. Ms. Link agreed that this could be broadened and that Mr. Waller’s terminology would be a good substitution.

Ms. Link also noted that a requirement for replacement of any existing trees or tree infrastructure that might be damaged during the construction process, and for approval by the NCDOT of any projects on state-maintained roads, had been added to the requirements.

Ms. Link then noted adjustments to the Vehicular Use Screening requirements. It was discussed that the requirements for the ordinance would only be applicable to new development and expansions, and that the requirement for a wall adjacent to residential zoning would only be used on the edges of downtown since that’s where residential zoning is. Judy Stalder asked about change of use, and Ms. Link explained that the portion of the ordinance that states that a change of use the causes an increase in the Land Use Code of 2 or more would require the landscaping, otherwise a change of use would not require landscaping.

In further discussion, several members voiced disapproval of the requirement for a masonry wall. Mark Reaves noted that it takes up less room than the 4' wide planting bed. Ms. Stalder wondered why a 6' tall wooden fence wouldn't serve as well. Judson Clinton noted that a masonry wall would look more upscale and be more durable. Ms. Stalder noted that masonry could include cinder block, which would not look upscale. Ms. Link agreed and said that the stipulation of brick or stone could be added. Ms. Healy raised the question of whether safety would be an issue, and in discussion following it was noted that this might be problematic, but no solutions were put forward by the group. Ms. Link noted that she would look into it and get back with them.

Further discussion covered the requirements for AO and UMU zonings, for which there were no changes, and the other specifications that would go into the Landscape Manual. Mr. Reaves asked about the option for fencing around tree wells and agreed to provide specification information.

Ms. Stalder asked about getting the changes out to her constituents in TREBIC. Ms. Link suggested that the ordinance was at a point where it could be shared.

Ms. Link then informed the committee that the Approved Plant List edits had been finalized and were ready to go on the website, and that staff was still working on the revision of parking ratios for automobiles and bicycles.

Ms. Lockamy then requested if there was any other business that the group had to attend to. There being none, the meeting was adjourned.