

**PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022 - 1:30 PM
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Chairman, Jeb Bittner; Vice Chairman, Jose Prieto; Members: Robin Pelensky, Theodore Perry, Jeff Stassi and Alternate Member, Elliese Shaughnessy **Also Present:** Planning and Development Director, Jason Jeffries; City Attorney, John Turner and Deputy City Clerk, Sherri Philo

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

A. Agenda Additions and/or Deletions

None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting – May 5, 2022

Mr. Prieto made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2022 Planning and Zoning Board meeting. Mr. Perry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED LANDSCAPING AND TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

*Please note that discussion on this item occurred throughout staff's presentation.

Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, went over staff's report and gave a brief overview of the draft Ordinance with the Board members (attached to the original minutes). He said they might need to look at updating *Section 72.06, Invasive trees and palms*, in that it might have been updated by the University of Florida or the State.

Mrs. Pelensky said it should come from the International Society of Arbor Culture.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would check into it.

Mr. Stassi referred to page nine (9), *Figure 72.1, Vehicular use area configuration, item 3) No more than 15 contiguous spaces between landscape areas*. He asked what currently meets this standard. He said nothing along Miracle Mile currently meets that requirement. Most of the parking lots along Miracle Mile are overloaded every day. He questioned if this would further restrict parking on future developments.

Mr. Jeffries said Miracle Mile does not meet the City's current standards. He explained that the City's current Code requires landscaped areas at the end of the islands, which Miracle Mile does not

have.

Mr. Prieto referred to the landscaped islands. He questioned if anyone has seen a tree flourish in an island.

Mrs. Pelensky said it depends on the species and conditions. One of the challenges that a landscape designer architect has with parking is meeting the minimum canopy requirements when they are working with tiny spaces. She said one way to have more flourishing canopy trees in an island would be to have the adjacent bays to be pervious pavers. She explained that would allow the roots to expand outside the curb.

Mr. Stassi said that he was involved with a company in the past and their landscaping was going to have blocks with holes in them so that the water would absorb into the ground rather than having a retention pond. He asked was there any thought about adding something like that as a tradeoff for a developer.

Mr. Jeffries said that would be a discussion when they work on the stormwater management section of the Code.

Mrs. Pelensky said they do give credit for stormwater retention if they use pervious pavers, which would be the incentive.

Mrs. Pelensky said another challenge landscapers have with the canopy requirement in parking lots is that the canopies cover the signage. She said that she would like to be able to use Palm Trees in islands, however they would not have the shade.

Mr. Prieto referred to the requirement that the perimeters of buildings have to be landscaped. He suggested that they allow low lying shrubs rather than being required to have trees.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would look into it to see if they could have some flexibility.

Mrs. Pelensky referred to the landscaping requirements. She felt that the landscape professionals should be certified. She noted the Florida Nursery Growers Landscape Association offers a certification program.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would add the word “certified” under *Section 72.13 (d) – Landscape Plan Required*.

Mrs. Pelensky referred to *Section 72.16 – Landscaping specifications, item 3) At least 50 percent of required plant material shall be drought-tolerant species and item 4) – At least 50 percent of required plant material shall be native Florida species*. She asked is that language new.

Mr. Jeffries answered no. He said that is currently in the Code and during their research they found 50 percent was pretty standard.

Mr. Stassi referred to water conservation. He said that he didn’t know where the law came from, but he heard that after daylight savings begins in the fall, people can only water their landscaping one (1) day a week.

Mr. Jeffries thought that came from the St. John’s River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

Mr. Stassi said that might be something they want to include in this, especially for commercial projects because they use more water.

Mr. Jeffries thought that was why they would require 50 percent of the plants be drought resistant.

Mrs. Pelensky read the last sentence under *Section 72.16, item (b)(1), The grouping of plants with similar water requirements is encouraged*. She felt that it should be *required* and not *encouraged*.

Mr. Jeffries would make that change.

Mrs. Pelensky referred to *Section 72.17 – Landscape Maintenance, item (c) – Irrigation System*. She felt this section was very vague. She said irrigation would make or break a landscape. She said it states in part, “...shall be fully operational and shall be operated on a regular basis...”

Mr. Stassi said for water conservation he would put something in there that meets the requirements of SJRWMD.

Mrs. Pelensky felt there should be something in this section that would allow a plant establishment period and after that they would need to meet the requirements of SJRWMD.

Mr. Jeffries said that he would look into this.

Mr. Bittner questioned what is the next step. He said that he would like to take this information home and go through it and write down his comments.

Mr. Jeffries said they would not be holding their regular meeting on June 2, 2022, but he could put it back on their agenda for their June 16, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Bittner asked if they could write down their comments and return them to Mr. Jeffries’ office.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said they would need to send them to the City Clerk’s office and they would forward them to the Planning Department.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comments at 2:56 p.m.

Mrs. Catherine Booth said that she serves on the Tree Commission, but she is speaking today on her own behalf. She then read a prepared statement (attached to the original minutes).

V. PLANNING DEPARTMENT MATTERS

None

VI. BOARD MEMBERS’ MATTERS

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

/sp