

MINUTES - Approved

Windermere Tree Board

October 21, 2021

Mission Statement: Augment community awareness of our Urban Forest, provide education regarding the benefits of trees and a commitment to protect, preserve and proliferate our community's Urban Forest. Beautify our Windermere Parks and Recreation Areas.

Tree Board Members: Susan Carter (Chairman), Frank Krens (Recording Sec.), Jacqueline Rapport, Leslie Brabec, Pamela Schrimsher
Town Liaison: Bill Martini

1. **Call To Order** - Chairman Susan Carter called the regular meeting of the WTB, as an in-person meeting, with a quorum present at 10:06 am in the Town Hall on October 21, 2021.

Tree Board Members present were: Susan Carter, Jackie Rapport, Leslie Brabec, Pamela Schrimsher, and Frank Krens. Town Council liaison Bill Martini, Public Works Director Tonya Elliott-Moore, and Public Works Foreman Travis Mathias were present.

2. **Public Comment** – None

3. **Approval of Minutes** – Leslie Brabec made a motion to approve the August 2021 Minutes as written except that the content under “Public Comments” is to be moved to “New Business”. Frank Krens seconded, and they were approved with that change 5/0.

4. **Old Business**

- a. **Oakdale and E. 5th Update:** Chairman Susan Carter said that there is still some brush to clean up, but that most of the vines and debris that has collected over the years has been removed.

5. **New Business**

- a. **2022 Tree Giveaway / Getting Started** – Board members recalled that last year's approach worked well in all regards, that feedback from participants was positive, and agreed to follow the same approach in 2022. Decisions ahead are:
 - the number of trees, tentatively around 120
 - the varieties, tentatively only 5-6 types, and with more flowering types
 - more and better signage

There was broad related discussion as follows on ways to improve our urban forest.

Comprehensive Plan – Public Works Director Tonya Elliott-Moore noted the need for a comprehensive tree canopy sustainability plan, to address both Town-owned and residential properties and to include planning and funding for elements such as:

- replacement of lost trees, with more mature trees in certain cases
- control and removal of invasive species
- educating Town maintenance staff and residents on regulations and methods
- rewarding people for getting involved in tree programs

Susan Carter noted the need for timely structural pruning, which can extend tree life and reduce long-term tree maintenance cost.

Approach – Frank Krens mentioned that an Urban Forest Management Plan and tree survey were developed for the Town of Windermere in 2006 and that implementation of such a comprehensive plan is expensive and can overwhelm Town staff and budgets. Tonya Elliott-Moore stated that she could provide information on software tools such as are being used for the road works and that, if shared among Town staff, committees, and projects, can save effort and cost. It was agreed that, whatever approach we use, we should start small, perhaps focusing on Central Park.

Gazette Articles - Leslie Brabec mentioned the November 13 deadline for the Gazette and that she plans an article, possibly on diversification and/or on native and flowering trees.

There was discussion on having a Gazette article explaining the current law covering tree removal. It was agreed that this would need help from Town Manager Robert Smith and possibly the Town attorney. It was also noted that the current law leaves municipalities with little control, everyone with a lot of confusion, and may be changed.

- b. Historic Citrus Grove/ Work Project/Weeding:** – Susan Carter stated that the trees are greatly in need of weeding and, according to Tom Stroup, some roots are exposed and need to be covered with sand. A work session was discussed but not scheduled.
 - c. Project to Mulch Park Ave Understory Trees** – After discussion, Tonya Elliott-Moore said she would consider having Public Works take care of it and would get a quote.
 - d. Structural Pruning at Windermere Rec Center** – Discussion was deferred pending completion of the project underway there by the Parks and Recreation Committee.
 - e. Palmer Park (added)** – Susan Carter noted the loss of several mature trees and the need to replace them and others that need to be removed around the playground. It was noted that this might be a good place to begin GPS location and tracking of Town trees.
 - f. WTB Financial Budget (added)** – Funding (including status of the Tree Mitigation Fund and funds shared/coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Committee) for Tree Board projects is not well understood by Board members. Tonya Elliott-Moore offered to pursue clarification with Town Finance Director Nora White.
- 6. Adjourn** – Leslie Brabec made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jackie Rapport seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:19am.