**Minutes**
**Wilmington Tree Commission Regular Meeting**

Join the virtually via Teams
Meeting ID: 274 024 861 164 76
Passcode: Nu6Lk27e

**10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m., October 21, 2026**

Members in attendance:
Tom Boland, Chair – Present
Lloyd Singleton – Present
Susie Rivadeneyra – Present
Robin Morgan – Present
Rhonda Waterhouse – Present
Cathey Luna - Remote
Ben Rigby – Remote
Terri Parham – Absent, excused

Staff in attendance:
Linda Painter, Planning and Development Department
Brian Chambers, Planning and Development Department
Todd Rademacher, Planning and Development Department
Sally Thigpen, Asset & Property Management
Dina Ricardo, Asset & Property Management
Ben Misleh, Asset & Property Management
Aaron Reese, Asset & Property Management

Alliance for Cape Fear Trees:
Isabelle Shepherd, Executive Director
Laura McCabe, Advocacy Committee

1. Call to order; note presence of quorum.
   Chair Tom Boland called the meeting to order at 10:46 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present. He introduced the commission, city staff, and members.

2. Review and approve minutes from September 23, 2026 (VOTE)
   Tom proposed approval of the previous meeting's minutes. There was no discussion. Rhonda made a motion to approve the minutes, Robin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
3. Strategic Plan Updates
   a. **Community Education to the Public**

Goal: Give presentations to three professional organizations that influence new community members on the value of trees and maintaining the tree canopy in Wilmington within 1-2 years.
Follow-Up Items: On hold during Tree Ordinance review

**b. Tree Ordinance and Enforcement**

Goal: Analyze current tree ordinance and recommend an amendment to the Land Development Code to increase tree retention in all new development within 2 years.
Follow-Up Items: Review of the October 14 Subject Matter Expert meeting
Chair Report – Lloyd Singleton

Tom asked Lloyd, chair of the committee, to provide an update. Lloyd summarized the discussion and the bullet points provided by the Planning and Development Department, and a copy of the department's analysis and planning schedule was distributed.

**c. Partnerships and Collaboration**

Goal: Create a spreadsheet and score card with statistics regarding number of volunteers, volunteer hours, trees distributed and used to provide updates to the public, determine the impact of work completed, and evaluate current practices within 2 years.
Follow-Up Items: Continued tracking of events and volunteer hours

Tom encouraged members to use the tracking sheet.

Susie asked about the status of the Heritage List update and suggested using shared cloud documents or Smartsheet to keep everyone informed. All members agreed.

4. Update on activities of the Alliance for Cape Fear Trees
   Executive Director Isabelle Shepherd shared the following updates:
   - ✓ The Tree Steward Program had grown to 41 participants that year. On Saturday the 24th, participants were scheduled to receive training on the trees planted the previous year and to plant additional trees.
   - ✓ CFCC has established a new certification program.
   - ✓ Murrayville Tree Giveaway, 1,000 native canopy trees! Priority given to Murrayville residents until 11 a.m., then open to all New Hanover County residents. Sponsored by New Hanover County.
   - ✓ Southside Tree Planting, Saturday, November 14, and Sunday, November 15 (12–3 p.m.)
   - ✓ Members were reminded of the fundraising event scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
   - ✓ Ben Misleh was recognized for his support in accepting and maintaining 300 trees that were delivered two months ahead of schedule.

5. Staff Reports
   a. Sally Thigpen – Asset and Property Management
      Sally noted that commission member Bridget Callahan had resigned because she was moving out of the city and that Jeanne Fisher had resigned for personal reasons. She presented the idea of purchasing T-shirts for members. The commission discussed branding ideas and name tags from Kids Making It and agreed to explore the proposal.
   b. Aaron Reese – City Arborist, Asset and Property Management
      Forestry was working on contracts for the planting season. His staff report included that the new city arborist was scheduled to start on November 16. In response to a question about the work on Third Street, Aaron stated that the work had been completed.

c. Planning and Development Department
No updates from this team.

6. Events:
    a. The Great NC Tree Conference – October 8-9, 2026 (attendee recap- Rhonda Waterhouse)
    The commission recognized the participation of Sally, Ben, and Rhonda. Rhonda, who wrote a news article about the conference, shared her impressions and highlighted what had attracted her attention.
    b. Fire in the Pines – October 10, 2026 (cancelled due to weather)
    The event was canceled because of the weather.
    c. TreeFest – January 15–16, 2027, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Independence Mall near JCPenney
    Members expressed interest in participating in and signing up for the event.
    d. North Carolina Arbor Day – March 19, 2027
    The commission discussed planting a tree at a school. Forestry would provide the trees, and coordination with the school or county and the mayor would begin. The date was corrected to March 19, 2027.
    e. Additional Events of Interest to the Commission
    Lloyd asked about the Celebrate Downtown event, and Linda provided clarification. The commission expressed interest in hosting a table. Linda agreed to check availability and notify the members.
7. Old Business
    None.
8. New Business
    Aaron shared that the Free Mulch Program was scheduled for Friday, October 30. He also stated that the program would end after January because of city projects.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m. following a motion by Robin Morgan and a second by Cathey Luna.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 18 at 10:30 a.m. in the Azalea Room at Skyline Center, 929 N. Front St.