

**Minneola Council and Planning & Zoning Commission
Combined Workshop
Minutes
January 28, 2020 at 6:30 PM
Minneola City Hall**

The City of Minneola Council and Planning & Zoning Commission Combined Workshop was called to order by Mayor Pat Kelley. Also present were Vice Mayor Pam Serviss, Councilor Lisa Jones, Councilor Joe Saunders, P&Z Chair Debbie Flinn, P&Z Vice-Chair Paul Giacalone, Commissioner William McCoy, P&Z Commissioner Daniel Smith, P&Z Commissioner Jeff Henderson, P&Z Commissioner Leonard Jackson, Grant Watson (Assistant City Attorney), Mark Johnson (City Manager), and Barbara Hollerand (City Clerk). Councilor Kelly Price was absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelley called the workshop to order at 6:35 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Item 1: Tree Ordinance

Mayor Kelley provided background information.

Councilor Jones spoke regarding the current tree code, natural areas, and displaced wildlife.

Mayor Kelley asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Vice Mayor Serviss asked to excuse Councilor Price.

Consensus was to excuse Councilor Price.

Councilor Saunders spoke regarding tree removal permits and fines, tree and root damage to properties, trees shedding leaves, and trees on small lots.

Mayor Kelley addressed the invited panel of experts and requested their suggestions for updating the City's tree code.

Sheeba West, landscape architect with GAI Consultants, asked questions regarding the City's level of satisfaction with the current code.

Daniel Smith, P&Z commissioner, spoke regarding simplifying the code and making it easier to understand requirements.

45 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding “right plans in the right place.” She stated that there are
46 places where it not appropriate for any tree to be planted. She stated that for new
47 construction, the requirement should be on the developer and not on the individual
48 homeowner. She stated that 350 square feet of space is needed for a canopy tree. She spoke
49 regarding street trees and tree lawns as alternatives in subdivision design.

50
51 **Mayor Kelley** stated that existing, platted lots are an issue.

52
53 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding adopting a creative approach, planting canopy trees in
54 common areas, and using understory trees on residential lots.

55
56 **Tamron Fernandez**, Duke Energy representative, spoke regarding the need to understand
57 the height and spread of trees. He said requiring developers to set aside natural tracts for
58 trees is a good idea. He said 10 percent of the total project acreage is an example of a
59 reasonable amount of property to require as a preservation area.

60
61 **Brooke Moffis**, UF/IFAS extension office in Tavares, spoke regarding adding trees to
62 retention areas. She said the Villages does a good job with this approach.

63
64 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding environmental protection and property rights.

65
66 **Sheeba West** stated that environmental protection and property rights are not mutually
67 exclusive. She spoke regarding the City’s rolling hills and the image on the City’s seal.

68
69 **Mayor Kelley** asked what cities have good tree codes to emulate.

70
71 **Sheeba West** recommended adding more figures and illustrations to the City’s tree code.

72
73 **Debbie Flinn**, P&Z chair, spoke regarding recent state legislation regarding the removal
74 of trees that pose a danger.

75
76 **Mayor Kelley** spoke regarding sidewalks, untrimmed trees, and liability.

77
78 **Brooke Moffis** spoke regarding how proper pruning will result in trees growing up, not
79 out.

80
81 **Sheeba West** stated that older trees are better trained to grow properly. She stated that the
82 City’s current requirement could be updated.

83
84 **Nathan Focht**, Lake County resident, spoke regarding not requiring any trees on lots and
85 working with developers to designate areas for trees.

86
87 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding landscaping retention areas and setting aside additional
88 tracts.

89 **Kris Tietig**, Duke Energy representative, spoke regarding what landscaping is allowed
90 under power transmission lines. He stated that some areas in north Florida had developed
91 a successful wildflower program. He encouraged coordination with Duke Energy to
92 identify plant materials that could be installed under the transmission lines.

93
94 **Mayor Kelley** asked for specifics on what could be located under the lines.

95
96 **Kris Tietig** said no irrigation systems were allowed, but some walkways could be located
97 there with coordination with Duke Energy.

98
99 **Sheeba West** stated that some trail systems could be sited under the lines. She spoke
100 regarding similar projects in Seminole County.

101
102 **Mark Johnson** spoke regarding underground utilities and root systems.

103
104 **Tamron Fernandez** stated that roots can damage underground utilities during storms. He
105 stated that root systems extend two to three times farther out than the tree canopy.

106
107 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding the planned unit development process and clustering
108 trees.

109
110 **Sheeba West** recommended requiring the maintenance of natural sites in perpetuity.

111
112 **Mayor Kelley** suggested requiring fewer trees, but better trees.

113
114 **Councilor Saunders** stated that the issue is that the developer will have to be the one to
115 put in the trees, but right now, the requirement is on the builder.

116
117 **Tamron Fernandez** spoke regarding implementing a credits system.

118
119 **Mayor Kelley** asked about the time required to establish habitat needed to sustain wildlife.

120
121 **Brooke Moffis** spoke regarding keeping invasive species from establishing on sites so that
122 the pioneer plant species can grow. She said 20-30 years is needed to develop a hardwood
123 canopy.

124
125 **Mark Johnson** asked about micro habitats.

126
127 **Brooke Moffis** spoke regarding creating layers of vegetation for birds and the importance
128 of plant diversity. She said turfgrass is not ideal for wildlife.

129
130 **Mayor Kelley** asked about jump-starting the restoration process.

131
132 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding using new technologies to accelerate the process. She spoke
133 regarding hydroseeding with wildflowers, stating that it was less expensive than sod. She
134 mentioned mulch with microorganisms.

135 **Tamron Fernandez** stated that these approaches save builders money.

136
137 **Councilor Jones** mentioned Camp Lake in the Hills of Minneola.

138
139 **Councilor Jones** mentioned perennial peanut as a groundcover.

140
141 **Mayor Kelley** spoke regarding lessons learned with the Triple E area and that Sugarloaf
142 will be the next issue.

143
144 **Fred Miller**, Minneola project manager, stated that a 75-foot landscape buffer is still part
145 of the Triple E properties.

146
147 **Vice Mayor Serviss** spoke regarding focusing on both future changes to the code and
148 strategies for addressing issues in existing subdivisions like the Reserve at Minneola.

149
150 **Mayor Kelley** suggested that the planning & zoning commission look into
151 recommendations for existing issues.

152
153 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding revising the current code now.

154
155 **Paul Giacalone**, P&Z vice-chair, spoke regarding invasive roots and property damage in
156 the Reserve at Minneola.

157
158 **Mayor Kelley** spoke regarding neighbors' trees affecting septic systems.

159
160 **Tamron Fernandez** handed out a tree guide brochure.

161
162 **Daniel Smith** spoke regarding planting guidelines and allowing homeowners to cut down
163 trees.

164
165 **Ramon Flores**, Minneola development services manager, asked if replacement trees would
166 still be required if trees were removed.

167
168 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding how not all lots will be able to meet some requirements. She
169 spoke regarding taking a forensic approach and developing preferences before making code
170 changes.

171
172 **Mark Johnson** asked if the consensus was to no longer require a removal permit.

173
174 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding licensed contractors versus homeowners removing their
175 own trees.

176
177 **Mayor Kelley** spoke regarding making changes to tree requirements in Ardmore Reserve's
178 later phases.

179 **Tamron Fernandez** spoke regarding using tree removal permit fees to fund tree projects
180 in the City.

181
182 **Kris Tietig** spoke regarding using incentives. He suggested planting a new tree on City
183 property when trees are removed on a residential lot.

184
185 **Mayor Kelley** spoke regarding eliminating the removal permit.

186
187 **Brooke Moffis** spoke regarding replacing canopy trees with understory trees.

188
189 **Mark Johnson** spoke regarding homeowners who want to plant trees.

190
191 **Sheeba West** spoke regarding root barriers.

192
193 **Nathan Focht** asked about maintenance costs for the preserved areas.

194
195 **Fred Miller** spoke against having the City responsible for maintenance.

196
197 **Mayor Kelley** said he will begin speaking with developers regarding new approaches for
198 trees on their future projects and phases. He suggested that the planning & zoning
199 commission focus on recommending changes to the existing code.

200
201 **Brooke Moffis** spoke regarding the benefits of individual homeowners planting more
202 native plants and pollinators in their yards.

203
204 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding native plant requirements.

205
206 **Sheeba West** stated that homeowner associations cannot prohibit xeriscape landscaping.

207
208 **Brooke Moffis** said homeowner associations can dictate placement of rain barrels. She
209 mentioned that the extension office is holding a Florida-friendly landscape class in
210 Fruitland Park in March.

211
212 **Mayor Kelley** suggested that Duke Energy can help the City to counter developers'
213 resistance to landscaping under transmission lines.

214
215 **Joyce Heffington**, city planner, asked for clarification on the collection of tree removal
216 permit fees.

217
218 **Mark Johnson** spoke regarding enforcing the code while being less stringent.

219
220 **Councilor Jones** spoke regarding planting wildflowers in the Reserve at Minneola.

221
222 **Mark Johnson** spoke regarding planting trees at Citrus Grove Road and North Hancock
223 Road.

Mayor Kelley suggested getting with Duke Energy to see what could be planted. He spoke regarding establishing a matching grant beautification program for older neighborhoods.


Tamron Fernandez asked if the City had an Arbor Day celebration.

Mayor Kelley spoke regarding setting up meetings with the homeowner associations to discuss ideas.

(Meeting adjourned at 8:24 P.M.)

ATTEST:





Pat Kelley, Mayor



Barbara Hollerand, City Clerk