

**CITY OF SKY VALLEY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025, AT 1:00 P.M.
3608 HWY 246 (CITY HALL) & VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM)
SKY VALLEY, GA 30537**

MINUTES

THOSE PRESENT: Dan McAfee, Tony Allred, Don Germano, Jim Pyburn, Mayor Hollie Steil, City Manager Streetman, City Clerk Fleming, and Communication Specialist Van Camp

THOSE ABSENT: David Spears and Jim Phelps

1. Call to Order

Chairman Dan McAfee called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Don made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Tony, unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

August 27, 2024

Tony Allred made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Don, unanimously approved.

4. Election of P&Z Chairman

Dan stated per Ordinance that a chairman is elected annually and asked for nominations. Don nominated Dan for another term, Tony agreed and seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

4. Revisit the Tree Ordinance

Dan stated that the Tree Ordinance, that the committee has been working on, is just not workable and would like to take another look or come up with a different approach for something better to present to the Mayor and Council. The two current Ordinances that will be analyzed are 12-01 and the amendment 14-06. The amendment covers the protection of native shrubbery, trees, plants and clear cutting. He stated that fines are not listed through Municode on our website. The amendment to the Tree Ordinance will rectify

that. Dan suggested for the Committee to start over from scratch with the Ordinance. The goal of the new Ordinance is to have better defined guidelines to showcase what the City is trying to protect. The City is currently a Firewise Community but needs to incorporate the guidelines of the agency into the Ordinance. Firewise is managed by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) which was founded in 1985. The following of their guidelines would help contain potential wildfires.

Discussion ensued over the 25% of trees left guideline, which is currently in place, and how to consider the remaining trees, their canopies, and diseases. Dan has been studying other comparable Ordinances from surrounding Cities and feels maintaining a certain canopy percentage is more workable than maintaining a certain count of trees. The replanting of trees when the removal of trees takes place, to help maintain the canopy percentage, should take place. The kind of tree(s) along with the size of replacement tree(s) needs to be specified. The penalties for violators will be revisited. Jim Pyburn stated that the penalties for violators are stated in the current tree cutting application. It reads as follows: "violation of the City's Tree Cutting Ordinances will be subject to a fine not to exceed \$1,000 per tree as well as replanting requirements". An Arborist was suggested as a source to help with the calculations for replanting of trees to optimize the canopy. The Committee is to consider what is in the best interest of the City, density or canopy? Dan gave some requirements from other cities which use density requirements instead of canopy percentages. One example was from the City of Brookhaven which guideline is 130 inches for each acre. That is measuring the tree's diameter. The Ordinance also needs to define tree removal and list restrictions for replanting of trees.

The Committee will start by contacting an Arborist, reviewing Firewise guidelines, penalties, and buffers. Dan will compile Firewise guidelines along with reaching out to Rabun County's Extension office. Jim Pyburn will reach out to an Arborist that is in the County to schedule a meeting for some questions. Tony Allred will review the Ordinance for the City of Brookhaven and other comparable cities for suggestions. Don Germano will review the current Ordinances and make suggestions on what to keep.

5. Set next meeting date

The next meeting date was set for March 25, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

6. Adjournment

Tony Allred made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don Germano, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:



Karen Fleming, City Clerk