

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

MINUTES

THOSE PRESENT: Chairman Dan McAfee, Members Tony Allred, Don Germano, and Jim Pyburn; Mayor Steil, City Manager Streetman, and City Clerk Fleming

THOSE ABSENT: David Spears and Jim Phelps

Call to Order

Dan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

February 25, 2025

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

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion - Tree Ordinance

Dan drafted a new Tree Ordinance and asked the members to review with a discussion to follow. The comments were received as each section was reviewed. All was good with the Ordinance's preamble. Section 1. Definitions – "Arborist" – defined but not mentioned in the body of the Ordinance as a requirement to obtain one. "Critical root zone (CRZ)" the numbers are incorrect, in the definition and should read twenty-six feet instead of twenty-six inches. "Drain field and septic tank" defined but not referenced in the body of the Ordinance. Also, the wording "approved by the city building inspector prior to permitting" should be replaced by "approved by a soil specialist". Concerning the "Firewise USA" should add that guides are recommended. "Specimen tree" define but not referenced in the body of the Ordinance. Don Rice, 1824 Ridgepole, suggested using the DBH form of measurement for defining a "Tree" instead of the form of

measuring at 18 inches above the ground to see if it is 25 inches or more in circumference. "Clear Cutting" needs to be defined under Definitions.

An Arborist had been contacted and is willing to meet with the Committee so they can gather information, but was unable to attend this meeting. The information could be helpful with the recreation of the Tree Ordinance as the topic is being discussed on whether or not an Arborist would be required in certain circumstances.

Discussion over fallen trees on vacant lots, whether or not they needed to be cleaned up. Don stated that if they are creating a potential fire hazard the City should be able to regulate.

Section 2. General Applicability – C (5.) "Kill or damage a tree due to neglectful operation of a vehicle" add "or any construction equipment." Under D – Don Rice, 1824 Ridgeway, suggested clarification on trimming of a tree as he recommended stating bottom half could be trimmed without a permit. Jim gave examples of "limbing up" for different tree specimens.

Section 3. Minimum Tree Density and Canopy Cover Requirements.

Dan stated that this section was added to focus more on the canopy coverage, which is the main goal, instead of the number of trees. Don asked Jim if this is a more workable concept and he answered yes. Jim suggested leaving both options in. Don Rice, 1824 Ridgeway, questioned how these requirements would keep a homeowner from clear cutting for a view. Dan stated that there is no such thing as a perfect Ordinance that could cover every possible situation.

Section 3. (A) Tony stated that in the paragraph "achieve" doesn't specify if planting or replanting would be required. There was a discussion on what tree specimen would be allowed as the terrain would have to be considered for planting. This topic will need to be further discussed.

Don suggested adding Section 3 of the old Ordinance back into the new, "Criteria for Evaluation Application for Tree Cutting Permit".

Section 4 – Procedure for issuance of a tree cutting permit

No changes suggested.

Section 5 – Appeal

No changes suggested.

Section 6 – Clear Cutting

Don Rice, 1824 Ridgeway, suggested renaming this section "Under Brushing" instead of "Clear Cutting". Don suggested for Section 6. (C) – adding it to the tree cutting application.

Section 7 – Permit Fees

No changes suggested.

Section 8 - Penalties for Violation

Don Rice, 1824 Ridgepole, asked if the replanting of trees could be mitigated on a different lot?

Section 9 - Protection of Existing Tree

Dan stated that this section would address any intentional harming of trees. Residential verses Commercial guidelines need to be addressed, for example buffering. There was a discussion on whether or not this section needed to be added to a Tree Ordinance or use it in a Development Ordinance and the consensus was to have it in both.

Dan stated that he would make the changes suggested, in the Draft Ordinance.

OTHER BUSINESS

Set next meeting date

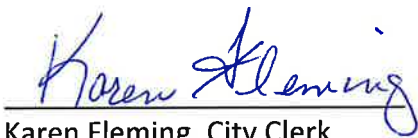
The suggested date for the next meeting was April 29th at 1:00 p.m. Don made a motion to set the date for April 29, 2025 at 1:00 p.m., seconded by Tony, unanimously approved.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Fleming". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "F".

Karen Fleming, City Clerk