

TPO News, Events and Opportunities



Upcoming Events

October 14 at 6:00 p.m. -
Town Council Meeting at
Town Hall

October 15 at 10:00 a.m. -
Regular Meeting at
Middleton Park next to Town
Hall. Seating is limited please
bring a chair if you are able.

December 6 at 2:00 to 5:00
- Christmas By The Sea at
Middleton Park

Assault on the Town of Oak Island Vegetation Ordinance

There were two competing plans presented at the September 18 Planning Board (PB) Meeting. One was presented by a resident that resides on the mainland portion of the Town of Oak Island and the other by Brice Taylor, Town Tree Program Manager. The PB passed neither and made their own recommendations.

The changes suggested by Brice Taylor focused on people filing building plans for additions to existing structures to include sheds, pools and enlargements et al. He wanted to create a category for homeowners seeking to 'improve' their existing property because at present they have to bring their entire property into compliance and he says he has been dealing with a lot of unhappy owners. His plan reduced the requirement from 1" dbh per 220 s.f. of lot to 1" dbh per 400 s.f. of lot just for the new category of people seeking additions etc. That is a 45% reduction! New construction would stay at 1" dbh / 220 s.f. of lot.

The current ordinance requires 4" DBH of trees for every 25' of street frontage on the property. Another area of concern in the Tree Program Managers's proposal is a recommendation that this be reduced to 2" DBH per 25LF of street frontage; cutting the requirement in half. In essence, you could save (or plant) one 4" DBH tree in the front yard setback and you meet the requirement. One of the most important roles trees play in any community is they create pleasant, shaded streets. The Town of Oak island will never plant trees in the Rights of Way along all of the side streets (where most of the homes exist). If we are to have nice streets we must rely on trees either planted, or saved, in the front yards of the houses. That was the purpose of this requirement.

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About Us

Tree Peace OKI is a 509 (a) (2) non profit incorporated in the State of North Carolina dedicated to promoting and educating about the value of trees to Oak Island, NC. We may endeavor to influence legislation for that purpose but we may not support any candidates or political parties.

Contact us

We meet the third Wednesday every month at 10:00 a.m. Message us on our Tree Peace OKI Facebook page.

Our Officers

Phil Dudley, President

Paula Byerly, Vice President

Eileen Soderberg, Treasurer

David Merkle, Secretary

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at treepeaceoki.org

A one year membership is only \$20

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The planning board, after good but brief discussion, rejected the idea that there should be a separate and more relaxed vegetation requirement for additions than for new construction. They also rejected my call for a special session of the planning board to discuss these changes to a plan that took a focus group working with town staff a full year to arrive at. [Initially Dural G. and Barbara T. agreed that there should be a special session].

Board Chairman Bradley wanted a vote;

1. They voted to extend the first and second row relaxed requirements that the first and second row now enjoy to the third row but only from 40th St East to the West Point of the island. [Chair Bradley cited personal experience and my own observations would support this change as a practical matter]. This amendment passed and will go to the town council to make the final call.
2. Rather than adopt a second tier for additions to existing structures the PB voted to change to 1" dbh per 300 s.f. of lot for every application except the front and second row. This passed with Barbara T. the lone vote against. It will go to TC for a vote.
3. Voted to increase the fine on commercial tree companies to \$1,000 for removing trees without a permit. This passed unanimously. It will go to TC for a vote... I am afraid legal council will inform them that the State of NC limits the town's ability to have fines greater than \$500.

The current vegetation ordinance was created by a Focus Group led by Development Services Director Matt Kirkland and it represented a cross section of citizens. Builders were well represented in the group. It took a full year to complete and Tree Peace OKI finds these changes to be rash and over done.

Researching the agenda for the Board of Adjustments over the last year I found two entries where citizens sought relief from the vegetation ordinance. Two, hardly an outcry of the citizenry. One was the gentleman who resides in our town but off the island. The other was a resident on Dolphin (third row) who wanted to add a pool to an existing home / lot.

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There are a lot of parts to this and two competing plans and they will both be coming before the Town Council Tuesday night October 14 at the regular Town Council meeting in Town Hall at 6:00.

Please contact me if you need a t-shirt for the meeting or if you can speak before the council in the time allotted for public comments ~ three minutes per speaker. We think that insufficient attention has been given to the changes to the ordinance that was carefully crafted with the input of citizens, builders and town staff - it was a year in creation and that effort should be respected.

Submitted by Phil Dudley

Trees and Your Energy Bill

Brunswick EMC has announced a mandatory Time Of Use [TOU] energy billing plan for all customers / members to start next month. During times of peak usage our co-op has to pay more for power purchased from peaking generating units. In the winter the peak period is in the morning, in the summer the peak period is late afternoon to early evening.

For markets to work efficiently the price has to correctly reflect the cost. TOU pricing has been an option for us but it will now be mandatory. Fortunately, you can make adjustments and possibly even reduce you energy bill. You will want to adjust your flexible load like using the dishwasher and laundry machines. A smart thermostat can be programmed to lower or raise the temperature so that your A/C runs less in the peak summer period and similarly the heat runs less on winter mornings.

You can also **plant a shade tree on the West side of your house** to block the hot summer afternoon sun. A.I. claims that here in NC we can save 25 to 35% of our air-conditioning costs with a shade tree on the West side of the house. In the winter the sun sets more to the South so the Live Oak tree on the West side will not block the sun when you want it to warm the house.

Plant Magnolias, Yaupon Hollies and Wax Myrtles on the North Side of you house to act as a wind break against cold winter winds.

Before central heat and air-conditioning these things were commonly practiced. Like cast-iron frying pans, whole foods and talking to people face-to-face we are learning once again that the old ways were the best ways!

Also submitted by Phil Dudley

Town Council & Mayoral Election

Four town council candidates gave responses that strongly supported saving and restoring the tree canopy in the Town of Oak Island. Tree Peace OKI provides this issue based voter aid but we are non-political and cannot recommend a candidate.



Tree Peace OKI Voter Aid

ON AN ISLAND NAMED FOR A TREE

Town Council Candidate Positions Scored with 3 Being the Highest Grade for Saving and Planting Trees in Oak Island

Candidate	Written Questionnaire
Tommy Brown	2.7
Chasey Bynum	2.7
Chip Frazier <i>(the only candidate to mention tree canopy in the LWV Forum)</i>	2.5
Kerri McCullough	2.7
Reece Simmons	0.7
Scott Stephenson	0.6

An informed town council makes better choices!



Tree Peace OKI Voter Aid

ON AN ISLAND NAMED FOR A TREE

Mayoral Candidate Positions Scored with 3 Being the Highest Grade for Saving and Planting Trees in Oak Island

Candidate	Written Questionnaire
Christopher Brown	1.7
Douglas James DeArros	We could not reach Mr. DeArros
Liz White	1.7

An informed town council makes better choices!

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THE END