



Minutes

Oriental Tree Board Meeting

DATE

January 6, 2026

DURATION

09:08 AM through 10:46 AM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY

John Deaton, chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Pat Allen, Stephanie Carperos, Janet Chinaea (sec’y), John Deaton (chair), Lou Ostendorf (com.), Madeline Sutter (em.), Missy Tenhet

Orientation: Some time at the beginning of the meeting was spent bringing Lou up to speed on policies concerning pruning of private versus public trees, and inventory efforts. Lou offered to discuss options for getting the inventory data on a GIS layer for town use.

Duke Line Clearing: John reported that Duke is still working in the area. He has been updating them with areas that need debris clean-up as he is made aware of them.

Tree City USA: John announced that Oriental’s application for Tree City USA certification has been approved again this year. Thirty-one years strong.

Tree Removals:

The budget amendment for the extraordinary tree removals was approved in November. The town has accepted TreeWise’s bids for the removal of the sycamores and poplars on the high priority list. Those removals will begin “soon”.

Lou suggested that the town get insurance certificates from all tree removal vendors. Diane confirmed that certificates are required by the town for all vendors.

Stephanie suggested adding Anthony Tindal Tree Service to the list of potential vendors.

The two camelias at 503 South Ave are ailing (one is virtually dead). Madeline expressed interest in having them. She offered that Landings Nursery has a tree spade that could remove them intact.

While not a direct Tree Board responsibility, there was some discussion about the complexities of sidewalk maintenance and street trees.

Planting:

309 High Street has requested 2 crepe myrtle trees. The Board agreed that this may be a good location for the annual Arbor Day tree planting in April. John will ask the owners for a color preference.

502 South Ave new owners have requested 2 Yaupon hollies to replace the dead dogwood. They suggested that they could pay for these new trees.

1213 Lupton Road, Missy spoke to the property owner. They are not ready to make a decision at this time.

Madeline has offered to provide the town with a 'copse' of trees (a diverse grove of relatively closely planted trees and/or shrubs) somewhere in town. Janet and Missy identified a spot in the Recreation Park, next to the sandbox, that may be suitable. Janet picked up soil sample kits from the NC State Extension office in Bayboro, to aid in species selection. After further consideration, Madeline suggested that we put this project on hold until the inventory is completed – that has a higher priority for the use of Tree Board members' time right now. Postponed but not abandoned.

Pruning Activities:

John reiterated that we need to be training young trees much sooner in their lifecycle. He is learning from the ISA courses he is taking, that most of the difficult pruning we are doing now is correcting problems that could have been avoided by early training.

John also observed that volunteer trees appear to be the source of frequent problems for the Tree Board. Removing some of these trees on town ROW will take special equipment and more money.

Other special pruning requests outside of area 1A include:

- Zone 1A: Midyette Street toward the boat ramp
- Zone 1B: More work is needed in the Recreation/Dog Park;
- Zone 1B: 6000 Dolphin Road, there are oak branches that are being damaged by trucks. The trees are not on town property, but they hang over the town ROW into the street. The owners have requested that we not raise the crowns of those trees until February for the health of the trees;
- Zone 2: The cypresses at the corner of Neuse Street & Factory need attention;
- Zone 2: 502 South Ave: The new owners of the Roe's House have removed most of the invasive privet hedge along the ROW on Neuse St Ext; but have requested more pruning of the trees there;
- Zone 2: Overhead clearance along Freemason is continuing, especially near Third in front of the Methodist Church, and the other side of Church Street;
- Zone 2: Third & Church: overhead clearance needed;
- Zone 3: Corner of Gilgo and Starboard Circle private limbs overhanging the ROW;
- Zone 3: 503 Ragan: owner requested lower limbs of live oaks pruned up for driveway clearance;
- Zone 3: 501 Ragan: owner requested additional crown lifting of live oaks;
- Zone 3: 1207 Lupton Drive: request that the Yaupon hollies on the ROW need pruning;
- Zone 3: The crepes around Brantley's need thinning and clearance pruning;
- Zone 3: Three young oaks at Vandemere and First need training.

Ordinance Amendments: Janet submitted the final version of the requested ordinance changes to Diane to include in the commissioners' packets for their next meeting. Janet and Pat offered to attend that meeting in case there are any questions. The latest addition to the changes pertained to the property owner's responsibility to maintain private landscape clearances over sidewalks and roadways.

John suggested that, in the new year, the Tree Board should consider doing more with regular bulletins to residents, offering pruning workshops, and perhaps planning some sort of tree give-away program through the Arbor Day Foundation. John ordered a set of pamphlets from ISA about trees and construction that could be offered with permits. Lou suggested a regular 'column' of tree-related information to be posted to the town's Facebook page and Towndock.net. Janet offered to also go over some of Bob's old press releases for topics.

Missy suggested the Board plan a field trip to New Bern to tour with their tree board to see how they manage their street trees. Although they are better funded and have more members, we could learn something we could apply here.

New Business:

John announced that he had heard that there is grant money available for trees in state-run programs. The Board had been discussing the possibility of establishing a new park, possibly on the parcel at Silverbrook & Broad where we planted the 150th anniversary tree last April. Lou suggested that we put together a proposal for commissioner consideration before applying for a grant.

Janet requested the town purchase 2 walking desks for Board members to use to facilitate the inventory work. The 2 harnesses would be under \$75 total. (After the meeting, the harnesses were ordered, and delivered by Friday.)

NEXT MEETING

The next full Board meeting will be **Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 09:00 AM** in the town hall main conference room. Pruning crews meet at the Town Hall most Tuesdays throughout the year. Volunteers are always welcome to join us.