

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING OF 10/28/14 AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA ITEM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Emily Braht, RLA, Landscape Architect

SUBJECT: Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by the City of McKinney to Amend Landscape Requirements, Tree Preservation and Appendix A (Plants Approved For Landscape Requirements) of Chapter 146, of the Zoning Regulations

APPROVAL PROCESS: The recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission will be forwarded to the City Council for final action at the November 18, 2014 meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments to Landscape Requirements, Tree Preservation and Appendix A (Plants Approved For Landscape Requirements) of Chapter 146 of the Code of Ordinances.

ITEM SUMMARY: Staff is proposing a series of amendments to the Landscape Requirements, Tree Preservation, and Appendix A (Plants Approved For Landscape Requirements), which responds to the revised City of McKinney Drought Contingency Plan, continuing drought conditions, and simplification of the Tree Permit application.

The proposed amendments represent Staff's effort to modify existing regulations (which have led to frequent requests to modify landscape installations due to drought conditions) to be more reflective of the drought conditions. Modifications have also been made to the Landscape Requirements removing evapotranspiration (ET) weather based controllers from the ordinance due to redundancy within another ordinance. Modifications of the Tree Preservation occurred with the modification of the tree permit applications form from three different types of Tree Permit applications to one type. At the request of the City Council, Staff has added drought tolerant plant material to the Appendix A (Plants Approved For Landscape Requirements), request was generated from the revised McKinney Drought Contingency Plan.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS: Staff is proposing a series of amendments to the Landscape Requirements (permits, landscape plan, and minimum landscaping requirements), Tree Preservation (Tree permit), and Appendix A: Plants Approved For Landscape Requirement.

Proposed Amendments Landscape Requirements:

1. Certificate of Occupancy During Drought Conditions: As proposed by Staff, a provision allowing a temporary certificate of occupancy with a deposit or financial assurance is allowed when landscape installation falls within a season of the year, June, July, or August, or during a stage 3 or stage 4 drought as determined by the city.
2. Landscape Plans prepared by Landscape Architect or Qualified Professional: Landscape plans shall now be prepared by a Landscape Architect or qualified professional approved by the landscape administrator. This has been amended to encourage the quality of submittals to the City, the complexity of the submittals are requiring a professional design and construction knowledge of a registered Landscape Architect. Projects that would not require a landscape architect are those developments of one acre or less.
3. Removal of Evapotranspiration (ET) Weather Based Controllers: As proposed by Staff, the inclusion of evapotranspiration (ET) weather based controllers within the landscape requirements is redundant. It is currently within the Landscape Water Management Regulations.
4. Allowance of Decomposed Granite within Parking Islands: As proposed by Staff, a provision allowing a minimum of fifty percent of the parking island covered in living plant material and a maximum of fifty percent of the parking island covered in bark mulch or decomposed granite material. This addresses a continued request by many developers for their parking areas. The plant material and bark mulch/decomposed granite mix allows for water conservation and easier maintenance.

Proposed Amendments Tree Preservation:

5. Reduction of Three Tree Permit Applications to One Tree Permit Application: As proposed by Staff, the existing three tree permit applications; Limited Use tree permit, Construction Tree Permit, and Affidavit of No Trees, are being combined to one Tree Permit application. This addresses the confusion that is continually occurring with too many application types currently in place for a tree permit. The revised tree permit application has been attached.

Proposed Amendments Appendix A. Plants Approved For Landscape Requirements:

6. Addition of Drought Tolerant Plants: As proposed by Staff, the term Xeriscape has been changed to drought tolerant. Additional drought tolerant plant material has been added to the approved lists and has been placed in **bold** type for easy identification.

7. Addition of Trees Approved Under or Near Overhead Utilities: As proposed by Staff, a list of smaller canopy trees have been added to the plant lists for use near and under overhead utilities. Currently within the ordinance we state that a smaller canopy tree must be utilized. This will address the many questions asked as to what tree may be used.
8. Tree Preservation Detail: As proposed by Staff, a new tree preservation detail was updated for better legibility.
9. Organization: As proposed by Staff, the Appendix A as a whole was reorganized by adjusting column placements and the addition of bold text. Staff has also removed several plants due to environmental conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- PZ Staff Report
- Proposed Landscape Ordinance
- Proposed Tree Preservation Ordinance
- Proposed Appendix A Amendments
- Tree Permit Application