

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 28, 2013

TITLE: Amending Sections 28.142 and 28.211 of the Madison General Ordinances to Update Various Landscaping and Screening Requirements and Create a Definition for Hedges. (31108)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 28, 2013

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, John Harrington, Lauren Cnare, Melissa Huggins, Henry Lufler, Richard Slayton*, Tom DeChant and Cliff Goodhart.

*Slayton was excused during discussion of this item.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 28, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL**

Prior to the meeting Tucker met with Slayton and Harrington to go through any issues they may have had, as well as suggested changes to the ordinance amendments. Harrington spoke to his concerns about plant growth reaching 75% (Section 28.142(3)(a)10.), that misrepresents what you’re actually going to see due to variation in growth and size with different plant species. He strongly objected to stone mulch as it interrupts the water flow to the soil; he wants that stricken, stone is a decorative element, it’s not a mulch (eliminate reference in Section 28.142(3)(b) Plant Selection). Tucker agreed with striking the “stone mulch” statement. Harrington suggested that the Landscaping Calculations and Distribution provisions in Section 28.142(4) should include the building footprint. If the building footprint precludes the ability to provide landscaping on a site because of size and extent, he suggested the City look into ways to require fees in lieu of landscaping to support providing landscaping somewhere else.

Harrington took issue with Section 28.142(5) purpose not being clear; as not always accurate to rely on the number size container but actually the size of the plant you want. What are we trying to achieve? Tucker noted that the requirements of Section 28.142(5) Development Frontage Landscaping replaces the old code required screening of parking lots; they thought it better to create a more prescriptive rule, while not indicating the specific types of greenery but relying on the design professional involved in each project. The provision requires “one (1) overstory deciduous tree and five (5) shrubs shall be planted for each thirty (30) linear feet of lot frontage. Harrington had issue with this provision providing for sufficient landscaping in certain circumstances, based on the variation in size and type of plantings. Why not simply say what you want to happen? If you really want an area to be planted then you need to tell the applicant what you want such as requiring a percentage of the area to be planted with trees and shrubs.

Harrington further noted issue with Section 28.142(3)(a)(10). Landscape Plan and Design Standards, the percentage of growth of trees of 75% provision. Tucker remarked that the intent is to try to get back to an

appropriate measurement of the size of the tree or shrub, not how large it will be in 15 years because these plants grow at different rates. Tucker stated that seventy-five percent seemed an appropriate mark but staff has no objection to a smaller percentage. Harrington preferred the old language (referring plant size after 15 years of growth). The intent is to give an idea of what the plant will look like.

Harrington recommended using ANSI stock standards, put the container size down and the plant size down in the table in Section 28.142(4)(c).

Wagner suggested Tucker and Harrington work on additional changes that could come through as a subsequent ordinance amendments that would deal with landscape concerns. Harrington suggested that you could show a couple of alternatives (grasses covering “x” percentages, narrow/wide, etc.), these are ways you could treat these that are acceptable; you’re trying to encourage good practice. The hope is you are getting the people submitting to understand what the City wants. Tucker responded they have a diagram that represents what some of these standards should look like.

Cnare questioned Harrington as to the adequacy of the Statement of Purpose. He noted the importance of enhancing the green infrastructure of the City to help reduce air pollutants, create ambience, mitigate the urban heat island effect and stormwater run-off issues. More and more states are pushing green infrastructure but this ordinance doesn’t do that. We should be meeting a 35% canopy cover.

ACTION:

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by Cnare, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0). The motion noted the following:

- Stone as mulch to be removed from Section 28.142(3)(6).
- Regarding the size of shrubs per ANSI, we need the container size and the plant size (Section 28.142(4)(c)).
- Add to the Statement of Purpose, Section 28.142(1) the importance of enhancing the green infrastructure of the City to help reduce air pollutants, create ambience, mitigate the urban heat island effect and stormwater run-off issues.

Work with Harrington in the future to deal with the tree/shrub requirement and its purpose in Section 20.142(5) as well as other landscape related issues within the ordinance that require attention.