



Environmental Advisory Committee

4:00pm, Thursday, July 9, 2026

City Hall

Council Chambers

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

Public Comment:

All citizens who wish to speak during the meeting must email their first and last name, address, and topic to Nicole DeNeane at nicoled@isleofpalms.gov no later than **3:00 p.m. the business day before the meeting**. Citizens may also provide public comment here: <https://www.isleofpalms.gov/public-comment-form>

Agenda

1. **Call to Order** and acknowledgement that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes – June 11, 2026**
3. **Citizen's Comments**
4. **Presentation – none**
5. **Old Business**
 - a. Update nn Native Tree Guide and Potential Tree Ordinance Changes (10 minutes)
 - b. Discussion of Palm Path Brochure (15 minutes)
 - c. Discussion of tree bank grant program (15 minutes)
6. **New Business**
 - a. Discussion of potential ordinance related to trash debris from commercial dumpsters (15 minutes)
 - b. Discussion of "Start the Month Clean" campaign (5 minutes)
7. **Miscellaneous**

Next meeting: Thursday, August 13, 2026, 4:00pm
8. **Adjournment**



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4:00pm, Thursday, June 11, 2026

1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC

and broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Present: Laura Lovins, Sean Popson, Britton Foy, Susan Smith, Eric Cicora, Cindy Marrs

Staff Present: Administrator Kerr, Deputy Administrator Kuester, Council Member Miars

Absent: Todd Murphy, Charlotte Webster

2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

MOTION: Ms. Popson made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2026 meeting, and Mr. Foy seconded the motion.

VOTE: The amended minutes passed unanimously.

3. Citizen's Comments -- none

4. Presentation – none

5. Old Business

A. Discussion of setting a date for Resilience 101 Training with the SC Department of Resilience

After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the September agenda would be dedicated to Resilience 101 Training. Administrator Kerr will invite members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals to attend for their continuing education requirement.

B. Discussion of suggested resources for matrix recommendations

Committee members discussed areas of interest related to the matrix recommendations. Deputy Administrator Kuester shared staff's version of the Public Safety recommendations matrix. He would like the reconcile the work being done by the Committee with their recommendations so that it can be easily updated.

6. New Business

A. Discussion of Tree Bank proposal

Ms. Lovins referenced the material in the meeting packet to share the idea of creating a Tree Bank program using a portion of the monies in the City's tree fund. She proposed the "Get Rooted" program would act as a source of grant funding for residents wishing to plant trees on their property. Protocols, an application process, and a list of approved trees need to be developed and then approved by City Council.

Ms. Lovins said that education and public relations are critical to the success of the program, adding it could be incorporated into the native tree guide.

Administrator Kerr suggested it could be structured like the ATAX grant application process. Mr. Foy suggested a tiered reimbursement option depending on tree and location selections. City Clerk DeNeane will send the ATAX grant timeline to Ms. Lovins. Mr. Cicora will work on the eligibility requirements, application process, and marketing.

MOTION: Mr. Cicora made a motion to move forward with the development of a tree bank program. Ms. Popson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion of Native Gardens and Landscaping Initiatives

Ms. Smith pointed to information on the City's website related to a native landscape contest encouraging residents to share how their property supports native trees and plants. She would like to have two more judges to help with the contest.

She asked for input from the Committee about ways to revive the now-defunct Garden Club.

C. Discussion of EAC Table at IOP Farmer's Market

Ms. Lovins said she would be able to represent the EAC at the June Farmer's Market but is not available for July or August. The Committee's table will distribute the food compost buckets as well as rotate the Committee's posters used at the Resilience Expo.

7. Miscellaneous

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 4pm.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Smith made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Popson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

From the Native Tree subcommittee

These recommendations for changes to the City of Isle of Palms tree ordinances came from **ISA-certified arborist Jerry Benoit**, who has advised the City of Isle of Palms on tree issues through the years. The subcommittee met with Benoit in person, and he has reviewed the following.

Contact info: Gerald J. Benoit ISA LLC,
ISA Certified Arborist SO-0608A
3300 Cedar Creek Ct, Mount Pleasant SC 29466
843-224-1629, Seajunkie49@gmail.com

- Under (g) of Sec. 5-4-61 “Permit required for cutting or removing trees” the language referring to ANSI Publication A300 (Part1) 2001 Pruning should be adjusted to remove the “2001” publication date and instead refer to “the most current” or “the most recent” edition available.
 - The City also needs to adjust its RFP's to follow ANSI's latest pruning practices so that “no green fronds” are removed from City palmettos. This will likely cut the amount of time needed for pruning palmettos on public land and right-of-ways by half, saving the City money.
- Property owners & developers should be required to have an ISA Certified Arborist review tree permit requests that involve any oak tree over 8 inches in diameter.
- Any **grand tree** removal request should require a TRAQ qualified ISA Certified Arborist Risk Assessment.
 - **Note from Susan:** “Grand tree” does not seem to appear in the City of Isle of Palms code, but does appear in the Charleston County code and is defined as “Any tree with a diameter breast height of 24 inches or greater, with the exception of pine tree and Sweet Gum tree (*Liquidamber styraciflua*) species.”
 - Isle of Palms city ordinances define a “historic tree” as any live oak tree (*Quercus virginiana*) having a diameter at breast height (DBH) of sixteen (16) inches or greater or any tree of any other species having a diameter at breast height (DBH) of twenty-four (24) inches or greater. We could consider applying Jerry's recommendation for “historic” trees on IOP instead.
- A Level 2 pre-construction assessment of trees on a property and a plan to protect them during construction should be done by an ISA Certified Arborist ahead of the project.
 - With a Level 2 assessment, the arborist documents the condition of each tree before the project begins as Good, Fair, or Poor condition.
 - Any Tree Preservation Plans must have a confirmation letter affirming compliance to all TPP requirements have been met.
- Impose similar penalties to the Town of Mount Pleasant's (see below) for not following tree construction protection plans.

- Property owners should document (pictures with a time stamp) that a tree being targeted for removal due to disease, severe damage from a weather related event, etc. really was not healthy before the removal. This would be required so the City is assured there was a clear and obvious issue with the tree.
- Create a tree commission, like Sullivan's Island, that can rule on tree-related matters and provide an appeal step for property owners, taking some of the heat off staff who may be pressed by the property owners to make exceptions to the rules.
 - **Note from Susan:** While Jerry suggested this, our City Administrator indicated at our last meeting that adding on another committee for City staff to keep up with would be tough, so we may need to consider alternative options for oversight.

FOR REFERENCE

* From the Town of Mount Pleasant's code

156.709 NOTICE OF VIOLATION AND PENALTY.

(A) If the Zoning Administrator finds that any of the provisions of this subchapter are being violated, they may issue a stop work order and shall, in writing, notify the owner of the property and the general building contractor, if applicable. In order to enforce this subchapter, town staff have the authority to access private property to investigate and make determinations of fact related to this section.

(1) Written notification shall indicate the nature of the violation and the action necessary to correct the violation.

(2) Such remedial action shall be in accordance with §§ [156.700](#) through [156.707](#).

(B) The issuance of a clearing and grading permit, tree removal permit, or letter authorizing tree removal, and the failure to substantially erect building improvements within 12 months that has resulted in tree removal without replacement shall be deemed violations of this subchapter. Each tree removed shall be identified as a separate offense.

(C) Notwithstanding the penalties designated above, violation of §§ [156.700](#) through [156.707](#), or failure to comply with any of the requirements hereof, shall be classified as a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum \$500 fine and/or a maximum of 30 days imprisonment, and/or shall be subject to a civil penalty that shall not exceed \$1,000 not including attorney's fees and costs to collect and enforce the civil penalty including, but not limited to, any proceedings to create a lien on any property owned by the owner of the property for any unpaid civil penalties.

(1) However, no penalty shall exceed the penalty provided by state law for similar offenses.

(2) Each tree removed or destroyed in violation of this subchapter represents a separate offense.

(3) Each day of violation also represents a separate offense.

(4) Any person, firm, organization, society, association, or corporation, or any agent or representative thereof, who commits, participates, or assists in such violation may each be found guilty of a separate offense and be subject to the penalties in this section.

(Ord. passed 1-14-25)

Sanitation

- **Composting** and **Glass** recycling at:
 - Mayor Carmen Bunch R. Park
 - 41st Ave near the fire station.
- Trash is collected at the following **frequency**

Aug 30 – May 29	Once per week
Jun 1 – Sep 4	Twice per week
- And on the following **schedule**:

Breach Inlet – 30 th Ave	Mon (Thu)
30th Ave – Wild Dunes	Tue (Fri)
- **Miscellaneous**, bulk items, and yard debris can be picked up on every other day so long as biodegradables are disposed of in a paper bag
- Other **recyclables** are collected by the County every second Thursday

Dogs on the Beach

- Dogs may be off their leash during the following times:

Apr 1 – Sep 14	5am – 9am
Sep 15 – Mar 31	4pm – 10am

- At all other times, dogs must be on their leash and under voice command
- Dogs must be vaccinated against rabies
- Dogs owners must have a certificate of vaccination readily available at all times and a metal tag with the name of the licensed veterinarian on the dog's collar
- Dog owners are encouraged to get a dog permit to facilitate the return of lost dogs

Parking

- Visitors can park on any road in the beach district unless it has been designated with a “no parking” sign
- All four wheels must be off the road
- CARTA runs a beach shuttle from Mount Pleasant during the Summer season



THE PALM PATH

CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS
GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDE

WWW.ISLEOFPALMS.GOV

(843) 886-6428

Beach Rules & Safety



Use designated beach access paths and stay off the dunes



Single use plastics and styrofoam are prohibited



Gatherings of over 50 people on public property require a permit



Fireworks and open fires are prohibited



No overnight sleeping or storage of beach equipment



Smoking and vaping is a fineable offense



No alcohol



Do not interfere with the sea turtles



If stuck in a rip current, swim diagonal to the shoreline



Beach wheelchairs available at the Police Department and County Park

Frequent Locations

Besides the beach:

- Recreation center – 24 28th Ave
Fitness classes, tennis courts
- Marina – 50 41st Ave
Public dock, boat rentals, dining
- Post Office – 1000 Palm Blvd
- City Hall – 1207 Palm Blvd
Permits, licenses, court, notary
- Public Safety – 30 J C Long Blvd
Fire, police, and parking

Golf Carts and LSVs

- Must have a drivers license
- May not drive on roads with a speed limit over 35mph including Palm Blvd and the Connector
- Golf carts must remain within 4 miles of your residence
- Golf carts cannot be driven at night

Noise

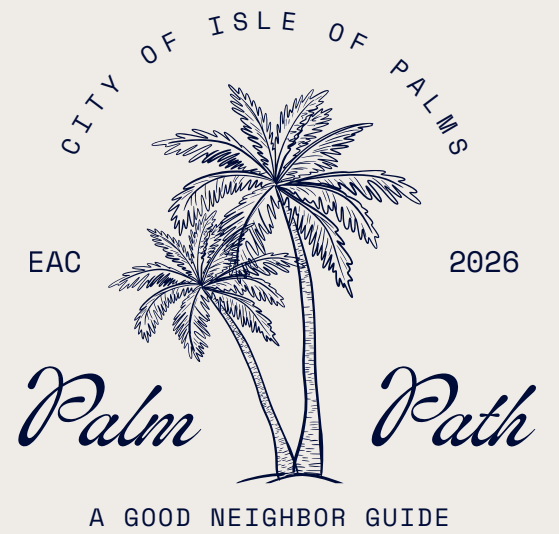
- 55dB night time noise limit measured at a complainant's property line:

Weekdays	10pm to 7am
Weekends	11pm to 7am

- A violation would only occur if a neighbor files a complaint

Other Ways to Have Fun

- Farmer markets on 3rd Thursdays from May through October at the Recreation Center
- Front Beach Festivals in May, September, and December
- Connector Run in October
- Marina boat rentals
- Kayak tours and rentals
- Golf cart parades every 4th of July





THE PALM PATH

A CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS

GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDE



THE PALM PATH

A GOOD
NEIGHBOR GUIDE

THE CITY OF
ISLE OF PALMS

A large, faint illustration of a palm tree trunk and fronds, extending from the bottom right towards the top right of the page, serving as a background for the title.

The
PALM PATH
A GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDE

WWW.ISLEOFPALMS.GOV

(843) 886-6428

To be placed on City of Isle of Palms letterhead:

Tree Survival and Maintenance Agreement

As a condition of receiving reimbursement under the Isle of Palms Tree Bank Grant Program, the Applicant agrees to maintain the approved tree(s) for a minimum of twenty-four (24) months following installation.

Applicant understands that the establishment period is critical to the long-term health and survival of the tree and agrees to provide reasonable care, including watering, mulching, and general maintenance consistent with accepted horticultural practices.

The City of Isle of Palms and/or its designated representatives may conduct periodic inspections during the 24-month establishment period to assess tree health and program success.

In the event of tree loss, the Environmental Advisory Committee may review the circumstances and, at its discretion, provide guidance on replacement opportunities or future program participation.

Tree loss resulting from storms, flooding, disease, pests, or other circumstances beyond the Applicant's reasonable control shall not negatively impact the Applicant's standing in the program.

The purpose of this Agreement is to promote successful tree establishment and long-term canopy growth for the benefit of the Isle of Palms community.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Isle of Palms Tree Reimbursement Program

1. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Semi-Annual Application Windows:

Window	Submission Deadline	Review Period	Award Notification
March/April Planting	January 15th	Late January	Early February
Oct/Nov Planting	July 15th	Late July	Early August

- Applications may be submitted year-round and will be reviewed during the two annual cycles – Spring & Fall planting
- Approved tree planting must be completed within the planting window, listed above

2. REIMBURSEMENT TIERS

Tier	Reimbursement	Eligibility Standard
Priority	80%	Property on Street with Buried Utility AND within Designated Low-Canopy Zones
Enhanced	65%	Property on Street with Buried Utility OR within Designated Low-Canopy Zones
Standard	50%	All other qualifying properties

3. ELIGIBILITY MATRIX

Criteria	Requirement	Tier A	Tier B	Tier C
Property Inside IOP City Limits	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Owner Occupied Residence, or Isle of Palms City Owned Common Area	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Owner Authorization	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Native Species Only	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tree Cost Documented	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Planting Cost Documented	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimum Container Size	15-gallon minimum	Yes	Yes	Yes
Application, Approved by EAC	Required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survival Agreement, Executed	24 months	Yes	Yes	Yes
Buried Power Line Street	Tier qualification factor	Required	Optional	No
Canopy Deficiency Zone	Tier qualification factor	Required	Optional	No

4. APPLICATION COMPONENTS

- Phase One: Before Planting
 - Property Specifications
 - > Owner Name
 - > Address
 - > Parcel ID
 - > Site Sketch
 - > Photos

- Tree Specifications
 - > Species
 - > Size
 - > Quantity
- Requested Tier for Reimbursement Purposes
- Phase Two: After Planting
 - Cost Documentation
 - > Tree Cost, receipt
 - > Labor Costs, invoice
 - > Other
 - > Photos
 - Survival Agreement, executed

5. RECOMMENDED VENDORS

- City-maintained list of approved arborists, nurseries, and installers.

6. APPLICATION REVIEW & APPROVAL PROCESS

- Subjective review by the Isle of Palms Environmental Advisory Committee
- Focus on canopy need, utility compatibility, visibility, stormwater benefit, species suitability, feasibility, replacement value, “Right Tree, Right Place”, and available program capital.

7. ELIGIBLE (PREFERRED) SPECIES LIST

- Live Oak(*Quercus virginiana*),Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*),Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), Common wax-myrtle(*Cercis canadensis*), Eastern red cedar(*Juniperus virginiana*), Black tupelo(*Nyssa sylvatica*), Persimmon(*Diospyros virginiana*), Loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), Black Willow(*Salix nigra*), Cherry laurel(*Prunus caroliniana*), Eastern redbud(*Cercis canadensis*), White fringetree(*Chionanthus virginicus*), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) Other native tree species may be considered, with approval.

8. FUNDING CAPS

- \$1,000 per tree
- \$2,500 per property, annually
- \$5,000 per HOA/common area, annually
- \$60,000 in total allocated capital (*if the maximum payout is reached, additional funds may be allocated based on the overall value achieved*)

9. INSPECTION PROTOCOL

Phase One Inspection

Category	Review Standard
Utility Conflicts	Clear of overhead/underground utilities
Setback from Structures	Adequate mature canopy/root distance from home, driveway, pool, etc.
Property Lines	Avoid foreseeable encroachment issues
Drainage Conditions	Site suitable for species moisture tolerance
Salt/wind exposure	Species appropriate for coastal conditions
Visibility Safety	No obstruction of intersections, driveways, or pedestrian visibility
Root Conflict Risk	Avoid sewer lines, water lines, septic drain fields
Canopy Spacing	Enough room for mature spread without overcrowding

- Post-Planting Inspection within 60 days of Receiving Complete Reimbursement Request & Executed Survival Agreement
- 24-month Survival Verification

Proposal for a Start the Month Clean program

Joint effort from the City and Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew to encourage IOP property owners to clean up the public right away around their properties.

- It could include logos from IOPCC & the City of IOP so the City could tee it up on social media & in the City newsletter.
- Charlotte from the EAC says she's happy to create related graphics.
- Susan can write a short news release to launch it & make it more of an official campaign.
- Otherwise, would be a light lift, and could be sent out as a reminder on the City's social platforms each month.
- Susan could help share the City's post on the IOP Facebook pages.
- We might be able to get this rolling in August

Draft text:

Start the month clean

Collect & dispose of litter
in the public right of way
around your property
the 1st week of the month

Be safe & watch out for traffic while cleaning up

Help Keep IOP Beautiful!

Katie Miars sent this email to Douglas on 6.26.26:

"I have seen 2 dumpsters going over the connector flying trash out into the ICW and there are currently 3 on my street that are overflowing. I imagine there is something we could do to make it so the building inspector could make them not overfill it or maybe the companies responsible for the dumpsters licenses to work out here. I called Trash Gurl one time I saw one with trash flying off on the connector and the woman pretty much told me to pound sand."

Douglas responded with the following information:

"Good morning, Katie- see note below from our code enforcement officer. He has put them on notice, but would have to catch something flying out to write a ticket.

I also believe that a Code Enforcement officer could write a ticket for litter, but the provisions requiring dumpsters to have their loads secured is a SC Code, so it would require an officer to write that ticket."

Jayce Cowsky JKowsky@isleofpalms.gov

"Morning Doug, I went out to Forest Trail to check on that dumpster. It was definitely above where it needed to be. I talked to the contractor about putting some heavier material on top of the lighter material so it doesn't blow out. There isn't really anything I can do until the material blows out of the dumpster, then I can write a code violation. Most of the bigger dumpster businesses will tarp their loads . Most of our pollution on the connector comes from smaller businesses that have small dump trucks and smaller tow behinds trailers. I have also addressed this with the builder at that site on Forest Trail. I let him know any pollutions coming from over flowing dumpsters will be met with a \$1000 fine. I will also let Chief know and our traffic unit to be on the lookout for any vehicles that don't have a tarp on it. You can let the council member know that this matter has been addressed."

Laura Lovins responded on 6.27.26

“Good evening Douglas, Katie, and Susan,

I would like to propose the City consider an enforceable ordinance that would put dumpster companies on notice that if there are a minimum of two (2) trash violations that are reported by either private citizens, our code enforcement officer, or our City police, that company will be prohibited from doing business in Isle of Palms. The violation would have to include the name of company that was seen with trash blowing or falling out of it's dumpster, the time of day the trash was blowing or falling out of the dumpster, and the location onto which the trash was blowing/falling: street, road, avenue, parking lot, or connector.

I would like to have this as a discussion item on our EAC agenda for the July 9th meeting.”

Douglas Kerr's response:

“Laura- we can put this on the agenda for discussion.

Your policy brings up a lot of questions about enforceability and will require the Police Department.

To enact an ordinance that treats one industry differently than others, the city will need to be on solid ground and show there is a public need and a rationale that warrants treating them differently.

I would advocate that prior to enacting a new ordinance, we try to use the tools that we already have (tickets and business license revocation after five strikes in a year), but we can discuss the problems.

Jace, our code enforcement officer, happens to have a passion for this and can be seen on the Connector sweeping it regularly. He also let me know that the SC Code requires that the loads be “secure,” but not necessarily tarped and because securing the load is a SC Code, he cannot write tickets for it- only a sworn officer can.

If Jace sees something fly out, he can write them for littering, which is in the city code. He says most dumpster companies ensure compliance by using a tarp and that from his perspective the problems with debris flying out are more with individual pick-up trucks and not the dumpsters. I know Katie has seen un-tarped loads with debris flying- they just did not get caught.

The onus to keep construction sites clean is really on the builder, not the dumpster company.”

Proposed Objectives and Work Plan for EAC's IOP Septic System Project

1. Define "Where We Stand" with current septic systems on IOP

- Inventory all current systems, age, type, when last pumped out, when last checked and serviced, maintenance schedule, incidence of failures
- Map of septic systems
- Document water testing results in areas with largest density of septic systems and/or rising ground water levels
- Survey septic owners to understand challenges with systems
- Explore grants/research projects that can assist in current assessment (e.g., Nags Head use of groundwater data loggers through grant/project)
- Septic System Risk Assessment – to identify "hot spots"

2. Educate ourselves on all issues related to septic systems

- South Carolina regulations (e.g., NC requires a Vertical Separation Distance between septic field and seasonal high-water table)
- Standards for maintenance, ideally specific to coastal properties with stormwater, surface water, and groundwater dynamics
- Recent initiatives/best practices of similar communities (e.g., Nags Head)
- Understand pros/cons of alternative (sewer) and feasibility of transition
- Understand risks to community and public health

3. Develop recommendations for IOP City Council to adopt

- Establish a Septic Health Initiative (SHI) to encourage/require maintenance of septic systems and ongoing water quality testing, particularly impacts of high-water events
- Explore where City can impose requirements – require annual inspections, updates/changes upon sale to new owner, new building codes, etc.
- Explore Voluntary Septic System Maintenance Subscription Service
- Establish a Decentralized Wastewater Management Plan
- Develop owner incentives for proper maintenance or conversion to sewer
- Initiate a Long-Range Septic System Viability Plan to address wastewater treatment options as water conditions on the island change

4. Educate Community (particularly owners and renters) on Septic Systems

- Requirements and best practices for owners with systems
- Usage of systems – daily issues that owners/renters should understand
- Red flags for system failures
- Use of IOP website, articles, Palm Path, etc.