



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

| <b>Attendee Name</b> | <b>Title</b> | <b>Status</b> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Aditi Bussells       | Chair        | Present       |
| Edward H. McDowell   | Member       | Absent        |
| Tyler D. Bailey      | Member       | Present       |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of February 27, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Dr. Bussells, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the February 27, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

2. Approval of March 26, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Dr. Bussells, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the March 26, 2024 Health, Social, and Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes.

**PRESENTATION**

3. Forestry and Beautification Tree Planting Program Update - Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works and Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent of Forestry and Beautification – *Received as information.*

Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent of Forestry and Beautification shared a presentation on the City's reforestation program. The program goals include planting 500 trees annually, managing the City's canopy effectively, and diversifying tree species to enhance resilience. Coordinator Weston Beck was hired six months ago and is supported by certified arborists. Their focus is on replanting removed trees and collaborating with local organizations for beautification. Site



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selection considers utility infrastructure and state regulations, while an updated tree selection list prioritizes local soil-resilient species. Community involvement includes resident notifications and collaborative tree selection. The Beat the Heat Grant kickoff will be held on July 13, 2024. There will also be an educational event where tree vouchers will be given to private property owners. The reforestation program is instrumental in Columbia maintaining its 45-year designation as a Tree City USA.

There was discussion about concerns with managing invasive species; addressing neighborhood-specific planting challenges due to underground cabling; improving tree survival rates; exploring partnerships to expand tree coverage on private property; and adjusting planting strategies to accommodate changing climate zones.

Dr. Bussells requested follow-up on questions in relation to tree plantings in Melrose Heights.

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

4. Yard Trash Policy - Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works – *Received as information.*

Dr. Bussells said this discussion is in direct response to Councilwoman Herbert’s referral to this committee at our last City Council meeting.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works explained the Solid Waste Division’s current operational details in regards to yard trash. Specific requirements for service eligibility, such as the 51% owner-occupied rule for residential properties using front loader dumpsters, were outlined. The rate structure has not been revised since 1994 and it includes provisions for different service levels and special circumstances like construction projects. The City of Columbia does not provide free collection services to tax-exempt entities. Materials left on the curb without prior arrangement are subject to a payment process overseen by City of Columbia supervisors, with non-compliance potentially leading to involvement from the Code Enforcement Division.

There was discussion about past practices and enforcement procedures related to yard debris and construction waste.



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5. Columbia Signage - The Honorable Aditi Bussells – *Received as information.*

Dr. Bussells said this is a follow-up discussion on a longtime project. There's going to be several iterations of the new signage to replace the signs across the city and to be more cohesive.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works presented updated signage designs aimed at enhancing welcoming aesthetics. The designs include primary, secondary, and tertiary versions, with considerations for nighttime illumination.

There was discussion about removal of old signs; potential locations utilizing initial funding; the biggest gateways for sign placement; the wave motif and fonts; and the overall appearance.

There was consensus of the committee for staff to review the recommended changes with the vendor and to continue the discussion at a Work Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC  
City Clerk