

# STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 19, 2018

RE: **Ordinance to Provide For Unfulfilled Tree Removal Permits to be Forwarded to the Special Magistrate**

FROM: Karen DeMaria, City of Key West Urban Forestry Manager

When regulated trees and palms are removed from within the City limits of Key West, the planting of approved replacement trees and palms is required and the requirements are printed on the issued permit. Tree removal permits are treated similar to building permits and remain open until specifically closed by compliance to the issued permit. This compliance is achieved by planting the required trees and palms and having that planting inspected and confirmed, or paying a fee to the City of Key West Tree Fund.

As per the City Code of Ordinances, tree removal permits are valid for a period of 6 months with the possibility of two extensions if requested in writing (Sec 110-334). The Urban Forestry office does send out reminder letters to property owners after 6 months and then yearly. Since 2014, the Urban Forestry office has been diligently pursuing closure of older permits.

## Permit Completion Verification

(number of permits closed)

<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
129	344	557	420	401

\*note: an electronic database was fully established in 2014. Prior to that, tree removal permits were managed using a written ledger book.

The existing Code does not address a procedure for the closure of these permits when reminder letters are ignored and the files remain open. Currently there are a total of 305 open tree removal permits for the time period of March 2010 to January 2017.

The City Code does allow for the forwarding of Settlement Cases and Administrative Hearings to the Special Magistrate for enforcement. Approval of this ordinance will allow the forwarding of the old, open, tree removal permits to the Special Magistrate for further processing.