




MEMORANDUM

Date: May 9, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

Via: Albert P. Childress 
City Manager

From: Katie P. Halloran
Director, Planning Department

Subject: **File 24-5695 Presenting Tree Commission Resolution 24-01 in response to a City Commission request for budgetary and personnel recommendations to support the City's urban forestry program**

Introduction

The Planning Department recommends that the City Commission carefully consider and take action to realize budgetary and personnel requests as outlined by the Tree Commission through Resolution 24-01. These requests would function to support and improve the City's capacity to protect and improve its trees and shrubs, natural areas, and the forestry program's education and outreach services.

Background

The City Manager requested that the Tree Commission provide a presentation to the City Commission. The City of Key West Tree Commission Chairman, Misha D. McRae, presented to the City Commission at the February 8, 2024 hearing. At that hearing Commissioner Kaufman requested that the Tree Commission provide specific budgetary and programmatic recommendations to the City Commission at their earliest convenience. At their April 2, 2024, hearing, the Tree Commission discussed future actions and investments that could improve tree protection and support environmental and strategic plan goals associated with the urban tree canopy, and the Tree Commission. With support from the outgoing Urban Forestry Manager Karen DeMaria, and the Tree Commission attorney, Kendal Harden, the Tree Commission developed and approved Resolution 24-01, for consideration by the City Commission.

For fiscal year 24/25 the Tree Commission recommends that the City Commission consider allocating funding for the following:

- Establish one full-time position with job title, “Assistant Urban Forester”.
- Train and credential up to two arborists within Urban Forestry and the Community Service Department with International Society of Arboriculture (“ISA”) certification.
- Acquire an insulated aerial vehicle for proper vegetation maintenance.
- Fund routine vegetation maintenance.
- Fund annual training for proper installation and maintenance of local vegetation.
- Hire outside maintenance crews, when necessary.
- Finalize and implement the Evergreen Study for the Urban Forester and all associated positions.

Procurement

Tree Commission Resolution 24-01 provides multiple budgetary recommendations for City staff and City Commission consideration for fiscal year 24/25. The resolution also requests that City staff determine the exact funding required to fulfill the aforementioned budgetary and personnel recommendations and that City Commission allocate that funding for FY 24/25.

Recommendation

The City Manager’s Office recommends the Mayor and Commission consider Tree Commission Resolution 24-01 and consider allocation of associated funding during fiscal year 24/25 budget hearings. The Planning Department supports the Tree Commission’s recommendations.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A – Tree Commission Resolution 24-01