

Michael P. Murphy,
NJ-0146B

November 11, 2022

Ms. Jenny Welch
1163 East and West Road
James Island, SC 29412

Re: Camp Road Grand Trees

Dear Ms. Welch,

Thank you for contacting me about the 44 & 37.5-inch live oaks proposed to be removed for the projected Charleston County round-a-bout project at the Fort Johnson and Camp Road intersection. Being a board-certified master arborist, one of only 7 in the State of SC, I feel capable of supplying you with some valuable tree data.

I was able to visit the site and inspect the trees on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, and following is my report. Before driving down, I did a bit of homework and was able to review a graded spreadsheet of species and conditions for 26 trees adjacent to this project. On an A-B-C-D scale these two trees were graded as "C", in Fair Condition, both with vines and the larger tree with a hollow base. The grading language in use here is vague. Using words like Good & Fair are not in line with currently standard descriptors that can accurately relay a tree's physical and structural health. The language used in this spreadsheet is not concurrent with the language used in Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) based reports. These two trees will be assessed later in the report using International Society of Arboriculture backed assessment language and matrix qualitative criteria. This approach is a recognized and respected method of risk assessment used internationally by many governments and businesses.

I was also able to view the BZA Zoom Meeting from October 18th where this project was discussed. By watching that, I was able to hear a description of the physical and structural condition of the two trees from the statement given by the landscape architect associated with the project for the Applicant who discussed the arborist's gradings and the trees' conditions.

From these proceedings I learned that tree health was one of the five major criteria points that the design and development teams took into consideration in the makeup of this project. I also heard more about how these two trees accrued their Condition Grade:

- They were generously graded a "C" rating by the arborist.
- One has a hollow center (44-inch tree).
- They are full of vine.
- Their canopies are very bad.
- They were never really taken care of, trimmed or pruned over the years.
- They are very close to the road.
- They are scarred and damaged and not very good trees overall.

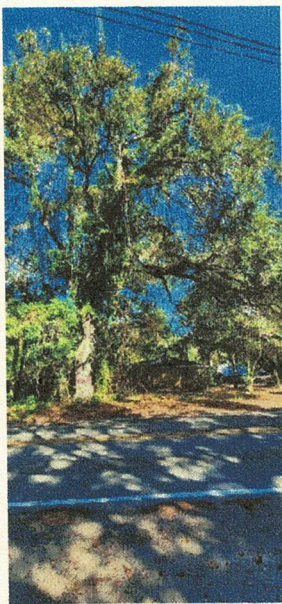
After taking this all in I was a bit skeptical about my site visit. There was a good chance that I would be traveling down only to see all of this condemning data had been compiled by another arborist.

When I arrived at the site and saw the trees, it seemed as if I were viewing two totally different trees than the ones described by the landscape architect. I can see a point, that if you just drove by these trees, you would not be able to take in the true quality of their canopies and stems. Most of what you would notice was the amount of vine in the area. You would need to stand under these trees and view their canopies from that focal point as well as from across the street, in order to appreciate the full features of their canopy quality and health.

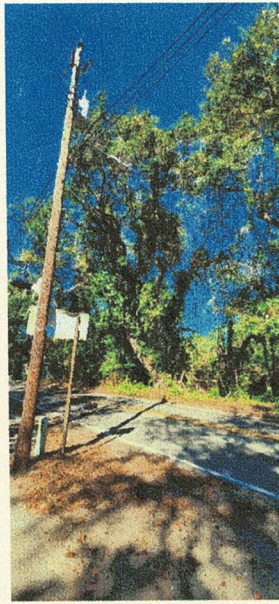
Here is what I observed:

- Both trees have compact canopies relative to their diameter with no dead ends or dieback present in their crowns.
- Leaf color and leaf size is normal as is woundwood formation.
- This compact canopy is partially due to the upper limb reduction that has taken place because of proximized lines crossing the street.

- There is a minimal amount of deadwood relative to the size and age of the trees considering the fact that they have only ever been utility-pruned.
- There is no hollow cavity present in the 44-inch tree as stated. What is present is a bark scar from a probable auto strike which most likely occurred approximately 15 to 20 years ago. The woundwood closure on this scar is progressing nicely and the tree heartwood where a hollow cavity may be expected to occur on some other tree species is solid.
- There is no evidence of any rootplate issues.
- The trees ARE full of vine.



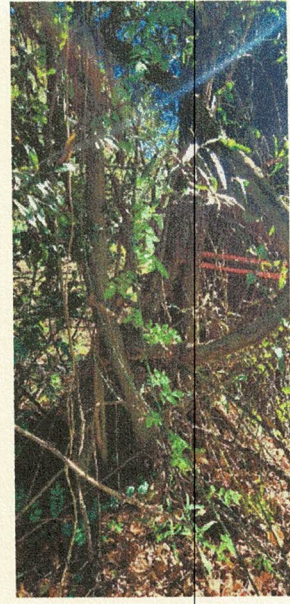
I



II



III



IV

I & II) Compact crowns with no dieback. Proper crown reduction from utility lines.

III) Healthy woundwood closure from past properly made pruning cut.

IV) Vines, vines, vines!

In contrast to the assessment language used in the project's spreadsheet, my assessment of these two trees will be created around the following matrix which is based on a modified Level II tree risk assessment using language based on TRAQ.

- A.) Trees with slight defects having an improbable likelihood of failure.
- B.) Trees with moderate defects having a possible likelihood of failure.
- C.) Trees with severe defects having a probable likelihood of failure.
- D.) Trees with critical defects having an imminent likelihood of failure.

I have assessed these two trees as "B". If tree pruning is performed by a certified arborist using the Natural Pruning System and the vine, deadwood and larger clumps of Spanish moss is removed from the crown these two trees would be upgraded to an "A". These trees are far from "fair" and well worth another look by the applicants as to their preservation.

As a board-certified master arborist, I cannot speak to any alternative plans as there are ROW, realignment and drainage considerations to bear in mind. But having past experienced successful consulting on directionally bored five-foot diameter drainage conduit underneath established live oaks root system with no adverse effects on the trees I know that there are options that can be taken in order to see no viable Grand tree removed.

The Town of James Island has been copied here in order to allow them notice that I am willing to comment on these finds and answer any questions in the meeting on November 15, 2022. I can do so by Zoom or by phone as I live in Beaufort.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael P. Murphy
Board Certified Master Arborist, NJ-0146B

Cc: Kristen Crane, Director of Planning, Town of James Island
Mrs. Brook Lyon, Chairperson, Town of James Island BZA