

Town of James Island
Minutes of the Tree Advisory Council
October 14, 2025, 5 p.m.

Present: Chair Robin Hardin, Lynda Glover, Susan Milliken, David Tomblin, Valerie Henshaw, Bridget Lussier, Vice Chair Julie Hallman, Natalie Rumph, Council Liaison - Mayor Brook Lyon.
Absent: Jenny Welch, Paul Cantrell. Guest: Town resident Gary Mingee

Welcome: Chair Hardin called the meeting to order. Members exchanged introductions. New member attending – Bridget Lussier

September 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes—David Tomblin made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Julie Hallman, members unanimously approved minutes.

Guest Addressed TAC- Town resident Gary Mingee, 1236 Old Orchard Rd, James Island. Mr. Mingee asked about the (2) pecan trees up for removal at the Hillman property to build the TOJI Arts and Community Center. (The TOJI BZA is scheduled to hear a variance request in October from the TOJI to remove (2) grand pecan trees from 1129 Hillman St to build the new TOJI Arts & Community Center). Mr. Mingee wanted to remove a similar pecan tree on his property, got an arborist report and contacted the Town, yet says the Town did not move it forward on his request. Mayor Lyon explained the tree removal process at the Town of James Island. Mr. Mingee is also concerned about TOJI Code Enforcement. Mr. Mingee departed the meeting to discuss further with Mayor Lyon. Mayor Lyon returned shortly after explaining the full process to Mr. Mingee.

Tree Canopy Award – The TAC presented a Tree Canopy Award to Mr. John Winfield at 923 Stiles Drive on Monday, October 13, 2025 (Grand Live Oak). Chair Hardin thanked the TAC members for attending, along with many of Mr. Winfield's neighbors. Photos posted by the TOJI on social media. The TAC was able to place the newly designed TOJI Tree Canopy Award sign at this tree. Thank you to Natalie Rumph for designing the new sign; thank you to the TOJI for purchasing new tree award signs.

Fort Lamar Area Tree Canopy and Tree Steward Awards to be awarded: A Tree Steward Award will posthumously recognize Mr. George Altine, (WWII veteran) who planted live oaks along Fort Lamar Road, in addition to a Tree Canopy Award going to Ms. Lourdes Andino at 1422 Fort Lamar Road. Date for presentation has been changed to: Saturday November 1, 2025, 12 Noon. Chair Hardin will send out a reminder to TAC members prior. Mayor Lyon and Chair Hardin will contact Hyam's about replacing their Tree Steward Award sign with a newly designed sign. Mayor Lyon will deliver the new sign.

First Baptist Church Tree Steward Award – David Tomblin and Julie Hallman will contact First Baptist Church on Camp Rd. and walk property with church reps to see oak trees. They will report back to the TAC at the Nov. or Dec. meeting.

Permanent Tree Award Winner Medallions- Update: Chair Hardin brought three designs (A, B or C) to consider for the permanent town tree award medallion (4 x 4 in). Small permanent metal medallions will be affixed to the tree winning the award. The TAC agreed that Design A (incorporating the TOJI town seal) is preferred. S. Milliken made a motion to select Design A, J. Hallman seconded the motion, Design A passed unanimously as the final design. Chair Hardin explained that the TAC can purchase (100) of the embossed metal medallions for \$684.00. These would last several years for tree awardees. S. Milliken made the motion to purchase the 100 medallions for \$684.00, Seconded by V. Henshaw, passed the TAC unanimously.

Tree Awards on Town's Website – Tree canopy award winners will be put on the Town's website, denoted by name of resident/property owner, street location (not exact address) and species of tree. Chair Hardin will work with the TOJI on this.

Discussion of Future Tree Award Winners – TAC members expressed the desire to locate other species of trees on James Island for awards besides live oaks, for example magnolia, sycamore, etc. Honey locust trees were discussed, there is a pretty one in Lighthouse Point, blooms in the spring.

November 7, 2025 – Tree Giveaway – Town Market. (100) 3-gallon trees will be provided by the Charleston Parks Conservancy (CPC) and will be distributed to residents at the Friday, Nov. 7, 2025 Town Market. Town staff will pick up the trees and set up the TAC tent and tables. Town Market is 6-9 p.m. Set up will be at 5 p.m./TAC members will assist. There will be tree planting brochures or a code provided by the CPC with tree planting info. TAC members who can help on Nov. 7th: J. Hallman, B. Lussier, D. Tomblin, Chair Hardin, S. Milliken. Robin/Bridget/Julie for set up at 5 p.m. Bill Lyon will design a banner for TAC table/s and Town will have printed. Chair Hardin asked about lighting for the tent and Mayor Lyon said the hope is to have electrical lighting for the event by then. Battery-operated lights will need to be purchased, if not. Mayor Lyon asked that someone stay in the tent until 9pm, even if all trees are given out earlier.

Drive-Through Tree Giveaway in February 2026 (Saturday, 2/7/26). This will be sponsored by both the TAC and the CPC. Hours of event TBD, but possibly until all trees are gone. (1) tree per household. More details coming in January 2026.

SC Arbor Day Celebration – Friday, December 5, 2025- Pinckney Park, 11 a.m. – Update on plans for Arbor Day with Riverland Terrace Garden Club -S. Milliken. Cider and cookies will be served, we will urge attendees who need chairs to bring them, the park pavilion may be available-Mayor Lyon will check. D. Tomblin suggested saving (2) trees from the Nov. 7th tree giveaway and planting them as well as the Red Maple tree that the garden club will provide.TAC agreed. The RT garden club rep and reps from the TAC will meet at Pinckney Park on Nov. 12th, 10 a.m. to decide where to plant the (3) trees w/D. Tomblin, Mayor Lyon & TAC members who wish to attend. S. Milliken will notify RT garden club Arbor Day Rep Janice Grant of 11/12 meeting at park. Arbor Day Proclamation in Nov. 2025- The Town will pass a “Proclamation for Arbor Day” as done in past years at their Nov. 20, 2025 meeting. Town will get out word of the Arbor Day celebration the week prior to Dec. 5th. The TOJI Holiday Market is also Dec. 5th.

Spring 2026 - Educational Tree Planting with an Island School – Possibly in April – Julie Hallman will head this up and contact schools. More info to come in early 2026.

TAC Budget Update—TAC has a \$5K annual budget for 2025-2026. Permanent tree markers and other items needed for Tree Giveaways will be purchased.

Status of Rights of Way Tree Conservation— TAC members discussed the condition of trees on the TOJI right of ways. Members will look for areas badly needing attention and pruning/treatment of trees/removal of vines in trees if needed. Members discussed the TOJI Tree Inventory done in the early 2020’s by CofC interns & TAC reps to establish the condition of large trees long main roads in the TOJI. The inventory will be located and reviewed.

For the Good of the Order-Discussion of the TOJI’s request for a variance to remove the (2) grand pecan trees at 1129 Hillman St. behind Town Hall, for the new TOJI Arts & Community Center to be constructed on the property. Many trees will be preserved on site & many trees will be replanted in the plans for the new art center. BZA will hear the case in October.

The next TAC meeting will be Tuesday, November 11, 2025, 5 p.m. Town Hall Conference Room. Note: This is Veteran’s Day.

Meeting was adjourned.