



# PENDLETON

S O U T H C A R O L I N A

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History, Hospitality & Happenings!

Town of Pendleton  
Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
March 12, 2026  
Pendleton Town Hall, 6 pm

## **Minutes:**

### **1. Election of Officer**

At 6:00 pm, Staff welcomed the commission to the March 12th meeting and asked for nominations for the commission's Chair. Ms. Dawson nominated Mr. Holland for the position of Chair, and Ms. Jones seconded the nomination. All present were in favor.

At 6:01 pm, staff asked for nominations for the Vice Chair position. Ms. Jones nominated Ms. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Holland. All present were in favor.

### **2. Call to Order:**

Chairman Holland called the meeting to order at 6:02.

### **3. Approval of prior meeting minutes:**

Mr. Baldwin motioned for approval, which was seconded by Ms. Dawson. All those present were in favor.

### **4. Public Comments:**

There were no Public Comments

### **5. Public Hearing:**

### **6. Reports:**

### **7. New Business/Discussion Item:**

- a. The consideration and recommendation to Town Council for a major change to the landscape requirements for Phase 1 of the Planned Development Falls at Meehan, specifically for the removal of 44 maple trees off Meehan Way, Antique Court, Tin Roof Court, and Home Place Drive. (No action will be taken.)

At 6:03 pm staff read their report to the commission.

Mr. Eddie Rodelsperger of the Falls at Meehan HOA provided background on the trees being placed in the right-of-way and the threat they pose to the utility lines beneath them. Stated he appreciated the trees but wanted to figure out a path forward to relieve the burden on the neighborhood's residents.

Ms. Dawson asked whether the HOA members were aware of the issues and the request to remove the trees. Questioned who's making the decision.

Mr. Rodelsperger stated they were not as aware of the issue as maybe they should be. Stated they had Clemson extension agents who would go in and make a recommendation on the trees' condition.

Ms. Dawson expressed concern about granting the request to cut down the trees, as people in the area were not made aware of what was happening.

Mr. Baldwin said it was an issue with the ordinance regarding the trees; the developer wanted to do it, and the HOA ended up taking on responsibility. There was an issue with trees that are on homeowners' property as well.

Mr. Rodelsperger stated they are only looking at those between the sidewalk and the road.

Mr. Baldwin asked whether the trees in the homeowners' yards would affect the water and sewer lines, or only those in the right-of-way.

Ms. Luckow inquired about evidence of damage.

Mr. Rodelsperger said there was a complaint from a homeowner whose tree had grown under the sidewalk and intruded on the foundation of his house.

Mr. Baldwin asked if the tree intruded on the foundation.

Mr. Rodelsperger said yes.

Mr. Baldwin asked the applicant to clarify which trees needed to be removed from the photos that were provided.

Ms. Jones stated she had a few concerns.

Mr. Rodelsperger said it wasn't the HOA, it was the developer at the time doing business as the HOA.

Staff referred to the attachment containing the Developer/HOA agreement with the Town of Pendleton Public Works.

Mr. Baldwin says people don't realize that the HOA's responsibilities gradually shift to the homeowner. Things are done for the benefit of the subdivision. Suggested that the commission should review the ordinances for future subdivisions.

Ms. Dawson asked whether they needed to look back and decide on the ordinances for the types of trees and their placement.

Some discussion amongst the commission about placing trees over utilities.

Mr. Rodelsperger said the developer signed the agreement with the Town in 2007. When it was signed, there wasn't a house in the Falls at Meehan.

Ms. Luckow reminded the commission that the developers are controlling the HOA until they hand it over to the residents.

Ms. Jones questioned the possibility of replacing the trees with another species.

Mr. Rodelsperger stated that he served on the Myrtle Beach planning commission for 8 years, and he learned that the decisions you made in your first year would not be the ones you would make several years down the road.

Mr. Baldwin said this may be an ordinance issue going forward.

Ms. Dawson stated that people who will be affected by the removal of the trees need to be aware.

Mr. Holland asked why not remove just the ones over the utilities. Allow them to remove only the trees over the utility lines, not all the trees. Suggested that they edit and word the ordinance so that trees can't be placed over utilities going forward.

Mr. Baldwin stated that in the future, they should route the utilities where they are not in the space where you don't want them to be

Chairman Holland stated they need to write an ordinance so that they can't have any trees over utilities; that's what they'll have to do going forward.

Ms. Jones stated that they should look at replanting it with a different type of tree. Taking them all out would change the area's aesthetic.

Ms. Luckow asked if all the trees in question were over the water and sewer lines

Mr. Rodelsperger stated that it was his understanding, yes

Mr. Baldwin asked which 44 trees we are referring to. He looked at the final plats for the development, and they didn't put the utilities there. The magnolias at the entrance of the development are on the lines, too.

Mr. Rick Lewis, HOA President Falls at Meehan Hoa said they belong to AnMed and the Bank

Ms. Dawson asked if Mr. Lewis would like to talk

Mr. Lewis stated that the 44 trees in question were Bob Newton's vision of a Charleston-style community, and he was the one who signed the 2007 agreement. We've had 5 arborists reach the same conclusion. The trees have gurgling roots and are starved for water. Two reasons to remove them. We've already had partial and full trees come down in storms; luckily, no one has been hurt. If they did, who is responsible: the HOA or the Town? Replanting trees we're objecting to. There were irrigation systems from Eric Newton. Steve Mudge, the second developer, removed them. We are not sure how you would water new trees. We would not add maples again, maybe crate myrtles, Clemson had a suggestion of 6 that could be put in instead. Greatest fear is that a homeowner will drive through the development one night during a heavy wind and someone dies. It is a pleasing sight when you drive in, but we're lucky no one has been hurt by the trees. We had 3 trees come down during hurricane Helene. For the bulk of the subdivision's duration, the declarant has run the show, not the HOA. Just in the last two years, the HOA has been run by the homeowners.

Ms. Luckow asked whether they had met with the homeowners and whether they had received any feedback.

Mr. Lewis said they have had some meetings.

Mr. Dawson said it's important that the people affected by the tree teardown know what's happening directly.

Mr. Baldwin stated that some of the trees are part of the yards, even though they're in the right-of-way, due to the subdivision's design. The houses on Meehan are right against the highway. People affected by these trees need to speak up, say yay or nay, or propose another solution.

Ms. Luckow said that if they were set on taking down all 44 trees, they should go to each homeowner to see if they approved, and if not, have them sign a legal document stating that what happens to this tree becomes the homeowner's responsibility.

Mr. Lewis stated that the question is whether it is actually their property.

Mr. Rodelsperger stated that Meehan Way had a 60-foot right-of-way, which ended immediately after the retaining walls.

Mr. Lewis asked the staff about a previous water leak in the area.

Mr. Poulson stated he does not know what caused the leak.

Mr. Rodelsperger asked whether the leak occurred in the right-of-way.

Mr. Poulson said yes

Chairman Holland stated that we, as a group, want to hear more information, specifically from people living near the trees.

Ms. Jones said, if they removed, what would they replace them with.

Mr. Lewis stated they had submitted information from Clemson Extension on which trees would be beneficial to be planted there.

Mr. Rines stated he did not include that information in their packet.

Mr. Holland asked that it be included by the time they were ready with an Action Item on this topic.

Ms. Jones said that in the past, we haven't told developers what type of tree they need.

Ms. Jones questioned removing all trees, maybe only 4 or 5 that should be removed.

Mr. Lewis said they've been advised that all the trees are starving for water and will die soon. The trees have gurgling roots strangling them.

Mr. Baldwin said he saw the gurgling roots during his visit to the site.

Ms. Dawson said she would like to hear from the tree expert present.

Mr. Holland asked the tree expert to come speak

Karl Porkony 161 East Queen Street, Town of Pendleton, certified arborist and Owner of Tree South LLC.

Stated he had looked at them in the past, and they should not have been planted there. The trees will all die. The trees have a stress-related disease; they were planted too closely together. His recommendation is to take them out.

Ms. Jones asked if they had enough water

Mr. Porkony explained that the roots pump gases and water in and out under the pavement. He hadn't seen the extensions list, but he would probably agree with what was on there. He agrees that this needs to be addressed in the future. Explained the legal issues regarding a tree falling over.

Ms. Jones asked whether he had any trees he recommended for those spaces.

Mr. Porkony made his recommendations, stating that he had examined the trees 5 years ago and believed they should be removed and replaced.

Mr. Holland asked if there were any more questions.

Mr. Baldwin said he wanted to make sure the HOA understood what the planning commission asked of them before they met again.

Mr. Lewis questioned what was needed before the next meeting.

There was some discussion between the commission and the applicant regarding the path forward and what was needed by the next meeting.

Mr. Baldwin discussed the recommendations the commission could make at the public hearing.

There is discussion about the tree ordinance requirements for developments and those established for Phase 1 of the Falls at Meehan.

Mr. Poulson reminded the commission that this is a request for a major change to the PUD, and that the options are forward. The only thing the commission is examining is the request to remove the trees entirely, without replacing them. If it were a 1-to-1 replacement of the trees, the request could be approved at the staff level.

Mr. Baldwin asked the HOA members present to confirm which 44 maple trees were the issue.

There is additional discussion among the commission about the options for recommendations before them.

Staff reminded the commission that no motion was required for this meeting; it was only a discussion.

**8. Updates:**

No updates were given

**9. Adjournment:**

With no further business, Mr. Holland asked if there was a motion to adjourn, Ms. Luckow made a motion, Ms. Jones seconded, all those present were in favor.

Chairman:  Date: 4-9-26