

**Ad Hoc Tree Committee
Meeting Notes
May 26, 2015**

Committee members in attendance: Jon Quitslund, Mack Pearl, Sarah Blossom

COBI Staff: Jennifer Sutton

Public: Charles Schmid, Jeff Bouma, Tim Goss

The meeting began shortly after 9 a. m. These notes reflect some discussion at the June 16 meeting of matters discussed on May 26.

Jennifer began the meeting by asking Jeff, “Do the Code standards for screening and landscaping achieve what we want?” Jeff said that, having applied the Code, for the most part he is satisfied with its terms. It’s easy enough to understand what “full screen” is supposed to achieve. He understood that the term “filtered screen” is on the way out. The “partial screen” requirement may be useful (see discussion below).

Jeff recommended that the screening requirement be stated in terms of a buffer’s square footage rather than linear footage: e. g., one tree per 250 sq. ft. rather than one tree per 10 linear ft. The committee approved this change.

At a later point in the meeting, Tim said that in his landscaping practice, typically he provides more than the minimum. Problems arise with grudging and shabby attention to the Code requirements, and (if the note-taker may interject) this reflects on the supervising planner’s responsibilities and on lax code enforcement.

Charles brought up some concerns with the project proposed for Rolling Bay, recently reviewed by the Design Review Board: plans involve a restaurant close to the northern property line, adjacent to residential development. (In the graphic accompanying an *Inside Bainbridge* story on the project, it appears that a full screen landscape buffer is in the plans, with the buildings on the interior of the site a short distance forward from the screen.)

Discussing a page of Perimeter Buffer Descriptions excerpted from BIMC 18.15.010.D, we agreed that in 4.a.iii, the requirement should be 50%, not 10% for native and drought resistant trees. In subsection a.vi, the divisor should remain at “four,” not six. Rather than “Partial Screen,” a better heading for subsection b. would be “Landscape Buffer.”

We discussed the reasons for requiring a full screen, and whether it’s consistently appropriate at the density of a hedge. Sarah observed that with a buffer as wide as 50 feet, part of it should be attractively landscaped, not a full screen. Screening along Hwy 305 is important; Mack observed that our winding roads call for landscaping, not always a full screen. Street tree planting is appropriate in some situations. Jon observed that the value of a screen is affected by whether the roadway is above or below the level of the buildings beyond it. Mack said that what we need are **performance standards**.

Changes in BIMC 18.15.010.D.4 were discussed. Mack said that clustering is not permitted in a full screen; there should be “no voids.” A partial buffer allows clustering of vegetation, and if gaps are desired to permit clear sightlines between a building and a roadway, it’s a landscape buffer.

Notes Approved: June 30, 2015