

ORDINANCE NO. 3 - 2024

TOWNSHIP OF FAIRFIELD

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR TREE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF FAIRFIELD

SECTION I. Purpose:

An ordinance to establish requirements for tree removal and replacement in the Township of Fairfield to reduce soil erosion and pollutant runoff, promote infiltration of rainwater into the soil, and protect the environment, public health, safety, and welfare.

SECTION II. Definitions:

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words, and their derivations shall have the meanings stated herein unless their use in the text of this ordinance clearly demonstrates a different meaning. When consistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words used in the plural number include the singular number, and words used in the singular number include the plural number. The use of the word “shall” means the requirement is always mandatory and not merely directory.

- A. “Applicant” means any “person”, as defined below, who applies for approval to remove trees regulated under this ordinance.
- B. “Critical Root Radius (CRR)” – means the zone around the base of a tree where the majority of the root system is found. This zone is calculated by multiplying the diameter at breast height (DBH) of the tree by 1.5 feet. For example: a tree with a 6” DBH would have a $CRR = 6'' \times 1.5' = 9'$.
- C. “Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)” means the diameter of the trunk of a mature tree generally measured at a point four and a half feet above ground level from the uphill side of the tree. For species of trees where the main trunk divides below the 4 ½ foot height, the DBH shall be measured at the highest point before any division.
- D. “Hazard Tree” means a tree or limbs thereof that meet one or more of the criteria below. Trees that do not meet any of the criteria below and are proposed to be removed solely for development purposes are not hazard trees.
 - 1. Has an infectious disease or insect infestation;
 - 2. Is dead or dying;

3. Obstructs the view of traffic signs or the free passage of pedestrians or vehicles, where pruning attempts have not been effective;
 4. Is causing obvious damage to structures (such as building foundations, sidewalks, etc.); or
 5. Is determined to be a threat to public health, safety, and/or welfare by a certified arborist or Licensed Tree Expert (LTE).
- E. "Person" means any individual, resident, corporation, utility, company, partnership, firm, or association.
- F. "Planting strip" means the part of a street right-of-way between the public right-of-way and the portion of the street reserved for vehicular traffic or between the abutting property line and the curb or traveled portion of the street, exclusive of any sidewalk.
- G. "Resident" means an individual who resides on the residential property or contractor hired by the individual who resides on the residential property where a tree(s) regulated by this ordinance is removed or proposed to be removed.
- H. "Street Tree" means a tree planted in the sidewalk, planting strip, and/or in the public right-of-way adjacent to the portion of the street reserved for vehicular traffic. This also includes trees planted in planting strips within the roadway right-of-way, i.e., islands, medians, pedestrian refuges.
- I. "Tree" means a woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.
- J. "Tree Caliper" means the diameter of the trunk of a young tree, measured six (6) inches from the soil line. For young trees whose caliper exceeds four (4) inches, the measurement is taken twelve (12) inches above the soil line.
- K. "Tree removal" means to kill or to cause irreparable damage that leads to the decline and/or death of a tree. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive pruning, application of substances that are toxic to the tree, over-mulching or improper mulching, and improper grading and/or soil compaction within the critical root radius around the base of the tree that leads to the decline and/or death of a tree. Removal does not include responsible pruning and maintenance of a tree, or the application of treatments intended to manage invasive species.
- L.

SECTION III. Regulated Activities:

A. Tree Removal and Replacement Requirements

1. Owners of properties up to 1 acre may remove up to 6 trees with a Diameter at Breast Height (“DBH”) of 8” or greater within a 12-month period. For each tree over 6 trees removed, the property owner must plant 1 tree with a minimum tree caliper of 1.5”.
2. Owners of properties between 1 and 5 acres in size may remove up to 15 trees with 8” DBH or greater within a 12-month period. For each tree over 6 trees removed, the property owner must plant 1 tree with a minimum tree caliper of 1.5”.
3. Owners of properties over 5 acres may remove up to 75 trees with 8” DBH or greater within a 12-month period. For each tree over the allowable number of trees removed, the property owner must plant 1 tree with a minimum tree caliper of 1.5”.

Replacement tree(s) shall:

1. Be planted within twelve (12) months of the date of removal of the original tree(s) or at an alternative date specified by the municipality;
2. Be monitored by the applicant for a period of two (2) years to ensure their survival and shall be replaced as needed within twelve (12) months; and
3. Shall not be planted in temporary containers or pots, as these do not count towards tree replacement requirements.

B. Replacement Alternatives:

1. If the municipality determines that some or all required replacement trees cannot be planted on the property where the tree removal activity occurred, then the applicant shall do one of the following:
 - a. Plant replacement trees in a separate area(s) approved by the municipality
 - b. Pay a fee of \$500.00 per tree removed. This fee shall be placed into a fund dedicated to tree planting and continued maintenance of the trees.

SECTION IV. Exemptions:

All persons shall comply with the tree replacement standard outlined above, except in the cases detailed below. Proper justification shall be provided, in writing, to the municipality by all persons claiming an exemption with “proper justification” consisting of photographs and/or a statement from a New Jersey licensed tree expert, per N.J.S.A. 45:15C-11.

- A. Residents who remove trees in accordance with the requirements of Section III(A) above.
- B. Tree farms in active operation, nurseries, fruit orchards, and garden centers;
- C. Properties used for the practice of silviculture under an approved forest stewardship or woodland management plan that is active and on file with the municipality;
- D. Any trees removed as part of a municipal or state decommissioning plan. This exemption only includes trees planted as part of the construction and predetermined to be removed in the decommissioning plan.
- E. Any trees removed pursuant to a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved environmental clean-up, or NJDEP approved habitat enhancement plan;
- F. Approved game management practices, as recommended by the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife;
- G. Hazard trees may be removed with no fee or replacement requirement.

SECTION V. Enforcement:

This ordinance shall be enforced by the Fairfield Township Code Enforcement Officer during the course of ordinary enforcement duties.

SECTION VI. Violations and Penalties:

Any person(s) who is found to be in violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of \$500.00 per tree.

SECTION VII. Severability:

Each section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase of this Ordinance is declared to be an independent section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase, and finding or holding of any such portion of this Ordinance to be unconstitutional, void, or ineffective for any cause or reason shall not affect any other portion of this Ordinance.

SECTION VIII. Effective Date:

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption and any publication as may be required by law.

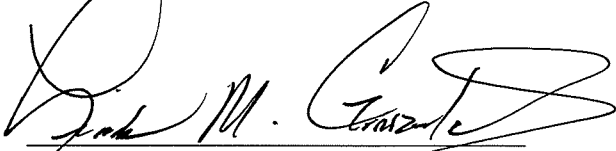
STATE OF NEW JERSEY :

: ss

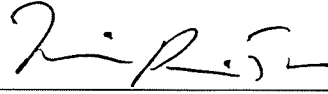
COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND :

Please take notice that the above Ordinance was adopted by the Township Committee of Fairfield Township after a public hearing on the 1st day of May, 2024.

ATTEST



Linda M. Gonzales, Municipal Clerk



Marvin Pierce, Jr., Mayor

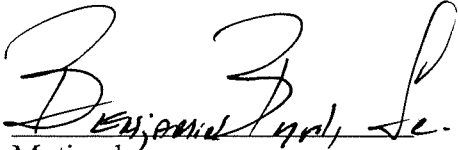
Adoption on First Reading: April 17, 2024

Publication on First Reading: April 21, 2024

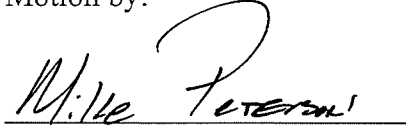
Second Reading/Public Hearing: May 1, 2024

Publication on Second Reading: May 6, 2024

Final Adoption: May 1, 2024



Motion by:



Seconded by:

Vote:

Bateman ABSENT; Burrus ✓; Byrd 1st; Peterson 2nd; Pierce ✓