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599-2018

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Dan Gelber and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager 
DATE: November 13, 2018
SUBJECT: **Heritage Tree Designation**

This Memorandum is intended to provide some background on agenda item R7W, *A Resolution Of The Mayor And City Commission Of The City Of Miami Beach, Florida, Initiating The Heritage Tree Designation Process For The Historic And Uniquely Majestic Sea Grape Trees On And Surrounding The City's 72nd Street Parking Lot, And Authorizing The City Administration To Take All Actions Necessary To Proceed With The Designation Process Set Forth In The City's Tree Preservation And Protection Provisions In Article II Of Chapter 46 Of The City Code.*

The Heritage Tree designation is one of three tree permit classes within the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance. The classes are broken down into non-specimen, specimen, and heritage; with each class having a more stringent criteria for justifying its removal through the ordinance. No tree work permit shall be issued for removal of a heritage tree without a written evaluation by an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist and or an American Society of Consulting Arborists registered consulting arborist demonstrating that removal is necessary to avoid an immediate peril to life and/or property, and/or the tree is dead, non-viable, or deteriorated to the point that removal is warranted. Furthermore, the tree work permit shall not be issued until the urban forester evaluates the tree and determines that removal is necessary. Removal and replacement of heritage trees must be approved by the environment and sustainability department director after consultation with the urban forester.

Prior to designating a tree as a heritage tree, a general health assessment would be conducted to identify any defects and whether such defects are correctable for preservation. In addition, the tree or tree grouping needs to meet one of the three criteria:

1. It is an historic tree or grouping of trees, of notable historical interest and value to the City of Miami Beach because of its or their location or historical association with the community.

2. It is a tree or grouping of trees of high value to the community because of its or their species, size, age, location, distinctive form, exceptional characteristics, ecological value, aesthetic value or other relevant criteria.
3. It is a champion tree or grouping of trees, identified by the State of Florida Division of Forestry as being the largest of its species within the state or by the American Forestry Association as being the largest of its species in the United States or the world.

This issue came up at the most recent Land Use and Development Committee meeting and staff indicated they would conduct a general health assessment of the trees in question and report back to Committee. Such an assessment has not yet been performed; therefore I recommend that the designation of the sea grapes on and along the perimeter of the 72nd Street Parking Lot be referred to the Sustainability and Resiliency Committee for further discussion.

SM/ESW/OL