



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**City Commission Agenda Memo**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

**#21-0663**

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

**FROM:** Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**DATE:** August 17, 2021

**TITLE:** Resolution Approving a Request to Relocate the “African Rain Tree” -  
**(Commission District 4)**

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**Recommendation**

Staff recommends the City Commission consider adopting a resolution approving a request to relocate the “African Rain Tree” located at 408 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Background**

On December 19, 1985, the City Commission passed a resolution declaring specified trees in the City to be protected, deeming they may not be damaged or removed unless otherwise approved by the City Commission. The “African Rain Tree” located at 408 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is included in that list. Please see Protected Tree Resolution 87-318 attached as Exhibit 1. Currently there are eight trees listed including the Rain Tree.

At the August 20, 2013 City Commission meeting, a resolution to relocate the “African Rain Tree” was approved, allowing the tree to be relocated to a site that was anticipated to be a public plaza/park space on the northeast corner of SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street as part of the Marina Lofts development. Please see Resolution 13-142 attached as Exhibit 2.

As part of the analysis to relocate the tree, an arboriculture report drafted in July 2012 indicated the tree was nearly 80-feet tall, the canopy was 135-feet east to west, 110-feet north and south, with a diameter over 6-feet measured at a height of 54-inches. Please see the Arboricultural Consultant Rain Tree Report attached as Exhibit 3 for more information.

In addition, Environmental Design submitted a tree relocation procedures/scope document and sequence report outlining the procedures and process for preparing the tree and executing the relocation. Please see the Environmental Design Rain Tree Report attached as Exhibit 4.

The Marina Lofts development was approved on the same date as the tree relocation for a 33 story, 960 residential unit mixed use development that included 20,500 square feet

of retail space and 12,000 square feet of restaurant space along with 1,313 parking spaces and extensive public improvements along the waterway and around the site, filling in the connection to the City's River Walk.

On October 23, 2020, the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) received an application for the site where Marina Lofts was approved, for a revised development called Raintree Residences, which indicates the African Rain Tree is to remain in its current location. This development application, which consists of a 784 unit mixed used development, is still under review by the Development Review Committee (DRC). However, the applicant has since indicated that they would like to relocate the tree closer to the New River to better accommodate the proposed development and allow for better access to the tree from the River Walk. The applicant has indicated that the new proposed location is at the terminus of SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the Riverwalk. Please see the Applicant's Narrative attached as Exhibit 5. The proposed location of the tree can be found on page 11 of Exhibit 5.

Resolution 13-142 was adopted with nine conditions of approval. These conditions of approval have been repeated in this CAM apart from the condition related to the \$1,000,000 bond. The applicant has requested a reduced amount of \$250,000 to provide for a more rational bond amount tied to tree preservation purposes. Please see page 2 of Exhibit 5 for additional information.

Should the City Commission approve the resolution to relocate the tree, staff recommends the following conditions of approval, which were part of the previous relocation approval:

1. The applicant must provide the City with a five-year warranty period on the survival of the tree, subject to a \$250,000 bond provided by the applicant. Bond is payable to the City of Fort Lauderdale, proceeds of which shall be used for the purchase of trees for the City.
2. The applicant must provide a preparation and relocation period of at least nine (9) months between root pruning and tree relocation.
3. If for any reason Environmental Design Inc. is no longer the contractor relocating the Rain Tree, the developer shall contract services of another tree relocating company of equal or greater expertise and as approved by the City Arborist.
4. An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist shall be on-site any time work is done relative to the Rain Tree. Prior to conducting any work, applicant shall notify City Forester.
5. Upon relocation, the applicant is solely responsible for the long-term health and maintenance of the tree, including but not limited to pruning, trimming and watering. Any pruning and maintenance of the Rain Tree shall be performed by an ISA Certified Arborist. Prior to conducting any work, applicant shall notify City Forester.

6. The applicant shall obtain a permit to relocate the tree as specified in the Environmental Design Inc. Relocation Plan, pursuant to ULDR Section 47-21.12, Tree Preservation, and as approved by the City Arborist.
7. The existing soil at which the protected tree is currently located must be moved to the new location with the protected tree and is to be used as the soil in which the protected tree will be planted.
8. No more than ten percent (10%) of the crown of the protected tree will be pruned to facilitate its relocation.
9. Applicant shall have the right to protect the protected tree through minimally invasive means, subject to the approval of City staff, for the duration of the bond.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

### **Strategic Connections**

This item is a 2021 Top Commission Priority, advancing the Parks and Public Places initiative.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area
- Goal 3: Build a healthy and engaging community
- Objective: Improve access to and enjoyment of our beach, waterways, parks, and open spaces for everyone

This item advances the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Here.

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- Public Places Focus Area
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element
- Goal 2: Be a community with high quality parks and recreational facilities that highlight the character of our City.

### **Attachments**

Exhibit 1 – Protected Tree Resolution 87-318

Exhibit 2 – Resolution 13-142

Exhibit 3 – Arboricultural Consultant Rain Tree Report

Exhibit 4 – Environmental Design Rain Tree Report

Exhibit 5 – Applicant's Narrative

## Exhibit 6 – Resolution to Approve

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Prepared by: Anthony Greg Fajardo, Director of Sustainable Development

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