

ORDINANCE NO. 11-23

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF DELRAY BEACH BY AMENDING CHAPTER 4, “ZONING REGULATIONS,” ARTICLE 4.6, “SUPPLEMENTAL DISTRICT REGULATIONS”, SECTION 4.4.16. “LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS,” SUBSECTION (E), “LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS” TO ADOPT REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL TURF AND SUBSECTION (H), “MINIMUM LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS” TO REMOVE AMBIGUITY; AND AMENDING APPENDIX A – “DEFINITIONS” TO ADOPT A DEFINITION FOR ARTIFICIAL TURF; PROVIDING A CONFLICTS CLAUSE, A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE, AUTHORITY TO CODIFY, PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City of Delray Beach (“City”) has experienced a steady increase in requests to use artificial turf as part of proposed landscape plans; and

WHEREAS, artificial turf is a non-living, impervious material that does not emphasize the natural beauty of South Florida or meet the intent of establishing and maintaining living plant ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, the Land Development Regulations do not specifically regulate the use of artificial turf; and

WHEREAS, the City of Delray Beach desires to provide clear regulations for the use of artificial turf that balance environmental concerns and the rights of property owners; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Florida Statutes 163.3174(4)(c), the Planning and Zoning Board for the City of Delray Beach, sitting as the Local Planning Agency, reviewed the proposed text amendment to the Land Development Regulations at a public hearing on March 20, 2023 and voted    to    to recommend that the proposed text amendments be approved, finding that the request and approval thereof is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets the criteria set forth in the Land Development Regulations; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The recitations set forth above are incorporated herein.

Section 2. The City Commission of the City of Delray Beach finds the Ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and in the best interests of the City.

Section 3. Chapter 4, “Zoning Regulations,” Article 4.6, “Supplemental District Regulations,” Section 4.6.16, “Landscape regulations,” of the Land Development Regulations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Delray Beach, Florida, is hereby amended as follows:

(A) - (D) (These subsections shall remain in full force and effect as adopted).

(E) ***Landscape design standards.*** The following shall be considered the minimum standards for the design and installation of all plant materials within the City of Delray Beach.

- (1) ***Design.*** Florida-friendly landscape principles shall be utilized in landscape designs and installations. Principles of Florida-friendly landscaping include planting the right tree in the right place, efficient watering, appropriate fertilization, mulching, attraction of wildlife, responsible management of yard pests, recycling yard waste, reduction of stormwater runoff, and waterfront protection. Other important considerations include:
  - (a) Appropriate planning and design to include consideration of the size and shape of lot, soil type, topography, intended use of area site specific planting to minimize irrigation waste.
  - (b) Use of soil analysis and appropriate amendments to provide better absorption of water and to provide beneficial plant nutrients.
  - (c) Efficient irrigation systems which permit turf and other less drought tolerant plantings to be watered separately from more drought tolerant plantings, consideration of low volume drip, spray or bubbler emitters for trees, shrubs and ground covers.
  - (d) Reduction of turf areas, utilizing less water demanding materials such as low water demand shrubs and living ground covers in conjunction with organic mulches.
  - (e) Utilization of drought tolerant plant materials and the grouping of plants with similar water requirements.
  - (f) Utilization of mulches to increase moisture retention, reduce weed growth and erosion and increase the organic content of soil upon degradation. Mulch should be initially applied at a three-inch depth but pulled away from direct contact with stems and trunks to avoid rotting. Mulched planting beds are an ideal replacement for turf areas.
  - (g) Appropriate maintenance to preserve the intended beauty of the landscape and conserve water.
- (2) ***Installation.*** All landscaping shall be installed in a sound, workmanlike manner and according to sound horticultural and planting procedures with the quality of plant materials herein described. All elements of landscaping shall be installed so as to meet all other applicable ordinances and code requirements.

- (3) ***Vehicular encroachment.*** There shall be no vehicular encroachment over or into any required landscape area. In order to prevent encroachment and maintain a neat and orderly appearance of all planting areas adjacent to parking spaces, accessways, and/or traffic, all landscape areas shall be separated from vehicular use areas by carstops or non-mountable, reinforced concrete curbing of the type characterized as "Type D" in the current edition of the "Roadway and Traffic Design Standards" Manual prepared by the State of Florida Department of Transportation, or curbing of comparable durability. In the case of curbing around required landscaped islands, the width of the curbing shall be excluded from the calculation of the minimum dimensions of the required island. Landscape islands are required to be a minimum of nine feet in width exclusive of the curb width.

The exception to this is that in paved parking lots, that portion of the parking space extending beyond the car stop may be sodded, and therefore, a vehicle would encroach into this specific landscaped area.

- (4) ***Quality.*** All plant materials used in conformance with provisions of this ordinance shall conform to the Standards for Florida No. 1 or better as given in "Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants" Part I, 1963 and Part II, State of Florida Department of Agriculture, Tallahassee, or the most current revised edition.
- (5) ***Trees.*** Shall be a species having an average mature spread of crown greater than 20 feet and having trunks which can be maintained in a clean condition with over six feet of clear mature wood. Trees having an average mature spread of crown less than 20 feet may be substituted by grouping the same so as to create the equivalent of a 20 foot spread of crown. Tree species shall be a minimum of 16 feet in overall height at the time of planting, with a minimum of six feet of single straight trunk with eight feet of clear trunk, and a seven-foot spread of canopy. Tree species required for single family homes and duplexes shall be a minimum of 12 feet in overall height at the time of planting, with a minimum of four feet of single straight trunk with six feet of clear trunk, and a six-foot spread of canopy.

When more than ten trees are required to be planted to meet the requirements of this section, a mix of species shall be provided. The number of species to be planted shall vary according to the overall number of trees required to be planted. This species mix requirement shall not apply to areas of vegetation required to be preserved by law. The minimum number of species to be planted is as follows:

REQUIRED NUMBER OF TREES	MINIMUM NUMBER OF SPECIES
11—20	2
21—30	3
31—40	4

41 +	5
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- (6) **Palms.** Shall be considered trees. Palms considered susceptible to lethal yellowing by the Florida Department of Agriculture shall not be used to fulfill the requirements of this article. Palm species which do not have a mature spread of crown of at least 15 feet shall be grouped in threes, and three palms shall equal one shade tree. Palms must have an overall height of a minimum of 16 feet and a minimum of eight feet of clear trunk at the time of planting. Palms used for single family homes and duplexes must have an overall height of a minimum of 12 feet and a minimum of six feet of clear trunk at the time of planting. Minimum overall palm height may be increased if palms are of a nature that the fronds hang below an eight-foot clearance, and are further, located in an area where pedestrians may be adversely affected by the fronds. No more than 50 percent of the required trees shall be Palms.

Coconut Palms and Royal Palms may be credited on a one for one basis with shade trees. Coconut Palms are permitted to have a minimum of two feet of grey wood at the time of planting, providing they are located so that the fronds are not hazardous.

- (7) **Shrubs and hedges.** Shall be a minimum of two feet in height when measured immediately after planting. Hedges where required shall be planted and maintained so as to form a continuous, unbroken, solid, visual screen within a maximum of one year after planting. To this end, shrubs shall be spaced a maximum of two feet, center to center, unless plants are exceptionally full, in which case the shrubs shall be permitted to be planted up to a maximum of 30 inches, center to center, provided the branches are touching at the time of planting.

Hedges must be allowed to attain height of 36 inches except where providing adequate and safe sight distance requires them to be maintained at a 30-inch height.

Hedges that are required for screening purposes shall have their height specified as follows: Hedges shall fully screen equipment that is five feet above grade or less. Equipment five to 16 feet above grade shall be screened with hedges that are half of the height of the item to be screened. In such instances, the required hedge shall not be any less than five feet in height. Anything higher than 16 feet shall be screened with shrubbery that is a minimum of eight feet in height.

- ~~(8) **Lawn grass.** (Turf or Sod) A major portion of water demand used for landscape purposes is required for the irrigation of lawn areas. Portions of landscaped areas that have been customarily designed as lawns shall be:~~

~~(a) Preserved as natural plant communities;~~

~~(b) Planted as redeveloped native areas; or~~

- ~~(e) Planted in traditional mixes of trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Property managed non-grass landscape developments of site specific plantings will typically be able to survive on reduced water requirement and survive drought conditions better than lawn areas.~~

~~For commercial, industrial and multi-family developments, no more than 70 percent of the combination of the required interior greenspace and the required perimeter landscape buffers, shall be planted in lawn grass. The balance shall be planted in a mix of shrubs and ground covers.~~

~~For the development of single family and duplex residences, no more than 80 percent of the pervious lot area shall be planted in lawn grass. A minimum of 20 percent of the pervious lot area shall be planted in shrubs and ground covers.~~

~~When used, lawn grass shall be clean and reasonably free of weeds and noxious pests or diseases. When grass areas are to be seeded, sprigged or plugged, specifications must be submitted to and approved by the City Horticulturist. One hundred percent coverage must be achieved within 90 days. Nurse grass must be sown for immediate effect and protection against soil erosion until coverage is otherwise achieved.~~

~~Solid sod must be used in swales, canal banks, rights-of-way and other areas subject to erosion.~~

- (8) **Lawn grass.** The irrigation of turf or sod lawn areas is a major source of water demand. Non-grass, site specific plantings have less water demand than lawn areas. Therefore, the use of lawn areas is regulated as follows:

- (a) **Maximum coverage.** Portions of landscaped areas customarily designed as lawns shall be preserved as natural plant communities; planted as redeveloped native areas; or planted in traditional mixes of trees, shrubs, and ground covers. The maximum lawn grass areas are as follows:

(i) Commercial, industrial, mixed use, and multi-family developments. No more than 70 percent of the combination of the required interior greenspace and the required perimeter landscape buffers, shall be planted in lawn grass. The balance shall be planted in a mix of trees, shrubs and ground covers.

(ii) Single family and duplex residences. No more than 80 percent of the pervious lot area shall be planted in lawn grass. A minimum of 20 percent of the pervious lot area shall be planted in trees, shrubs and ground covers.

- (b) **Maintenance.** When used, lawn grass shall be clean and reasonably free of weeds and noxious pests or diseases. When grass areas are to be seeded, sprigged or plugged, specifications must be submitted to and approved by the City. One hundred percent coverage must be achieved within 90 days.

- (c) **Mandatory sod usage.** Solid sod must be used in swales, canal banks, rights-of-way and other areas subject to erosion.
- (9) **Ground covers:** Ground covers used in lieu of grass, in whole or part, shall be planted at such spacing to present a finished appearance and reasonably complete coverage within six months after planting. All ground cover areas must be kept free from weeds.
- (10) **Vines:** Shall be a minimum of 30 inches in height immediately after planting and may be used in conjunction with fences, screens, or walls to meet physical barrier requirements as specified.
- (11) **Organic Mulches:** Organic mulches may be used in combination with living plants as part of a landscape design as provided in this section. However, organic mulches shall not by themselves constitute landscaping. No more than 25 percent of a front or side street setback may be comprised of mulch independent of living plant materials.
- (12) **Artificial turf.** The use of artificial turf is allowed on both residential and non-residential properties on a limited basis, as follows:
- (a) Artificial turf must not be visible from or installed in a public or private right-of-way.
- (b) Artificial turf is allowed in rear and interior side yards and only in side street yards when shielded from view, and in no event shall be installed closer than 5 feet to the property line or cross the front building plane.
- (c) Artificial turf is considered impervious coverage, but must be designed and permitted with a minimum permeability of 30 inches per hour per square yard. Artificial turf cannot be used within permanent drainage features (ponds, swales, etc.).
- (d) Artificial turf materials must have the following characteristics:
- (i) Lead-free, recyclable, and disposable at any U.S. landfill station.
- (ii) A minimum 8-year warranty.
- (e) Artificial turf areas may not be included in open space calculations.
- (f) Artificial turf may be used in combination with living plants as part of a landscape design, but artificial turf shall not by itself constitute landscaping. No more than 15 percent of the lot area remaining after building coverage, open space, and hardscaping are subtracted from the total lot area may be comprised of artificial turf.
- (g) Artificial turf must be installed outside of the drip line of any tree.
- (h) Natural or native plant communities are the appropriate material for properties located within a Historic District or Individually Designated Sites, as listed on the Local Register

of Historic Places. Artificial turf is not a historic material, and should not replace landscaping or sod, unless it is associated with a recreational element of the landscape design at a permitted location.

(F) - (G) (These subsections shall remain in full force and effect as adopted.)

(H) ***Minimum landscape requirements.***

(1) ~~***New s***~~***Single family detached residences.*** ~~For single family residences for which a building permit has not been applied for prior to October 1, 1990, t~~The following minimum standards for landscaping shall apply:

- (a) One shade tree shall be planted for every ~~2,500~~ 2,000 square feet of lot area, with a minimum of three trees per single family lot. Shade trees for single family residences shall be a minimum of 12 feet in height with a five-foot spread at the time of installation. Existing trees preserved on the site with the same specifications as above, may be credited toward this tree requirement.
- (b) Shrubs shall be installed along the foundation of the side of the residence that faces any street.
- (c) Air-conditioning units ~~whose height is five feet or less~~ in height shall be screened with shrubbery or wood fencing ~~that is tall enough to fully screen the units from view.~~ Units higher than five feet above grade shall be screened with hedges that are half of the height of the unit ~~item to be screened. In such instances, the required hedge shall not be any, but no~~ less than five feet in height.
- (d) All other lot areas not covered by driveways or structures shall be planted with lawn grass or approved ground cover. ~~or other approved landscape materials.~~
- (e) The area between the property line and the edge of pavement of the abutting right-of-way shall be sodded. Rock ~~or~~, gravel, mulch, or artificial turf is expressly prohibited from being used in the right-of-way.
- (f) All refuse container storage areas visible from an adjacent street must be screened with ~~vision obscuring fencing, or hedging. A vision obscuring, and an opaque gate must be used~~ in conjunction with hedging.
- (g) All landscaped areas shall be provided with an irrigation system, automatically operated, to provide complete coverage of all plant materials and grass to be maintained. The source of water may be either from City water or non-potable water. The use of recycled water is encouraged.

(2)-(8) (This subsection shall be in full force and effect as adopted).

(I) (This subsection shall be in full force and effect as adopted.)

Section 4. Appendix A – “Definitions,” of the Land Development Regulations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Delray Beach, Florida, is hereby amended as follows:

ARTIFICIAL TURF OR SYNTHETIC GRASS. An artificial grass mat manufactured with man-made materials such as polypropylene, polyethylene, and/or other materials, which is used to replicate the appearance of natural grass.

Section 5. Should any section or provision of this Ordinance or any portion thereof, any paragraph, sentence, or word be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remainder hereof as a whole or part thereof other than the part declared to be invalid.

Section 6. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith be, and the same are hereby repealed.

Section 7. Specific authority is hereby given to codify this Ordinance.

Section 8. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its adoption on second and final reading.

PASSED AND ADOPTED in regular session on second and final reading on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katerri Johnson, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shelly Petrolia, Mayor

First Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn Gelin, City Attorney