

ORDINANCE NO. 2008- _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA, AMENDING CITY OF TAMPA CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 13, LANDSCAPING, TREE REMOVAL & SITE CLEARING, ARTICLE III, TECHNICAL PROVISIONS; MAKING COMPREHENSIVE REVISIONS TO THE CODE PROVISIONS RELATIVE TO LANDSCAPE AND TREE PLANTING STANDARDS; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Tampa finds that the public welfare will be served by assuring that further development is consistent with the City’s desire to create a more sustainable community; and

WHEREAS, The City finds it is valuable to regularly review its various land development regulations to make them more resource efficient, and

WHEREAS, the City finds that a policy of sustainability incorporates the fundamental philosophy that the needs of the present generation do not compromise the needs of future generations, and

WHEREAS, the City encourages resource conservation, and

WHEREAS, the City finds that many homeowners, businesses, and building professionals have voluntarily sought to incorporate green building techniques into their projects, and

WHEREAS, The City of Tampa desires to continue to be recognized as a diverse, progressive city celebrated as the most desirable place to live, learn, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, The reduction of turf grass areas will contribute to conserving the City’s water resources, and

WHEREAS, The City recognizes that encouraging the use of “Florida Friendly Landscape” will contribute to conserving the City’s water resources,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Tampa:

Section 1. That the recitals set forth above are hereby incorporated as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2. That Section 13 Article III 13-162 of the City of Tampa Code of Ordinances is hereby amended as follows:

Amendment to Section 13-162. Landscape and tree planting standards

(3) *Irrigation.*

a. All required landscaping, as described in 13-161, shall be equipped with an irrigation system except as specified below:

1. Retained native plant habitat is not required to have an irrigation system.

2. Single- and two-family dwellings are not required to have an irrigation system. However, the addition of synthetic water absorbing polymers to topsoil prior to planting or sodding to increase water-holding capacity is encouraged.

3. Drought-tolerant landscape material (see the University of Florida IFAS Extension Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Florida-Friendly Plant List 2006 and as subsequently revised) planted in specific zones or beds is only required to be irrigated during establishment (minimum thirty (30) days) and protracted drought periods. Irrigation shall be a low-volume irrigation system.

b. The landscape and tree planting plan shall illustrate the proposed irrigation zones, delineating low-volume irrigation zones and areas utilizing irrigation techniques other than low-volume irrigation.

c. Irrigated turf areas shall utilize irrigation techniques other than low-volume irrigation. Turf areas shall be on separate irrigation zones from other landscape plant zones. In the case of expansion of an existing development, this limitation will apply to the area of new landscape, only.

d. In addition, in order to promote water conservation in the community, *Florida Friendly Yards* are strongly encouraged. A maximum of fifty (50) percent green space may be planted with turf grass configured with a permanent irrigation system (the maximum allowable new turf grass percentage will be reduced to 45% in 2009, 40% in 2010, 35% in 2011, 30% in 2012 and 25% in 2013 and thereafter.) Turf grass in excess of this limitation shall not be allowed to have a permanent or temporary irrigation system. In the case of expansion of an existing development or the completion or continuation of a phased development, limitations identified for allowable new turf grass percentages, will apply to the area of new landscaping only.

e. Turf zone head spacing shall achieve head to head coverage.

f. Sprays and rotors shall not be combined on the same control valve circuit. Sprays and rotors shall have matching application rates within each irrigation zone.

g. All irrigation systems shall be designed to avoid over spray, runoff, low head drainage, or other similar conditions where water flows onto or over adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, walkways, roadways, structures, or water features. Emitters and sprinkler heads are encouraged to be located at least two (2) feet from buildings and water should not hit the building while operating. Narrow areas (four (4) feet wide or less) shall not be irrigated unless low-volume irrigation is utilized.

h. Irrigation control equipment shall include an automatic irrigation controller having program flexibility such as repeat cycles and multiple program capabilities. Automatic irrigation controller(s) shall have battery back-up or nonvolatile memory to retain the irrigation program(s). Automatic control systems shall be equipped with an operable rain sensor or other devices, such as soil moisture sensors, to prevent unnecessary irrigation.

i. The irrigation system shall be designed to "Standards and Specifications for Turf and Landscape Irrigation Systems," Fifth Edition, 2005, Florida Irrigation Society and as subsequently amended.

j. All installations of new irrigation systems shall connect to the city's reclaimed water system if that system is available, as required by Tampa City Code, Chapter 26 and subsequent amendments

k. Sports fields, golf courses, cemeteries, and storm water management systems are exempt from the turf area limitation and low-volume irrigation requirements of this ordinance where functional need for turf is demonstrated. All other irrigation and landscape requirements of this ordinance apply.

Sec. 13-4. Definitions.

Automatic irrigation controller means a timer mechanism and its mounting box. The controller signals the automatic valves to open and close on a pre-set program or based on sensor readings. Control systems shall provide the following minimum capabilities: ability to be programmed in minutes, by day of week, season, and time of day; ability to accommodate multiple start times and programs; automatic shut off after adequate rainfall; ability to maintain time during power outages for a minimum of three (3) days; and operational flexibility to meet applicable year-round water conservation requirements and temporary water shortage restrictions.

Drought tolerant plant means a plant, once established, that survives on natural rainfall with occasional irrigation during dry periods, as identified by the University of Florida IFAS Extension Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Florida-Friendly Plant List 2006 and as subsequently revised).

Emitter means a device which is used to control the discharge of irrigation water from lateral pipes. This term is primarily used to refer to the low flow rate devices used in low-volume irrigation devices.

Irrigation means a permanent watering system equipped with surface, subsurface or overhead emitters and which provides one hundred (100) percent water coverage.

Irrigation zone means a control valve circuit containing irrigation devices with consistent application rates.

Low-volume irrigation means an irrigation system with a maximum flow rate per emitter of thirty (30) gallons per hour or less. These systems are not approved for turf grass applications.

Soil moisture sensor means a calibrated device that is designed to measure the quantity of water contained in a material, such as soil on a volumetric or gravimetric basis and override the irrigation cycle of the irrigation system at a pre-determined soil moisture level appropriate to site specific conditions.

Florida Friendly Yard or Landscape (as provided for in F.S. § 373.185) means a landscape that incorporates the Best Management Practices and philosophies described in “A Guide to Florida-Friendly Landscaping”, Third Edition, 2006 and as subsequently amended, and conserves water and protects the environment and are adaptable to local conditions and which are drought tolerant. Florida-friendly landscape principles include planning and design, appropriate choice of plants, soil analysis which may include the use of solid waste compost, efficient irrigation, practical use of turf, appropriate use of mulches, and proper maintenance.