

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING
OF THE TOWN OF CLARKSTON

March 18, 2025
7:00 P.M.

Town Council Meeting held at the Clarkston Town Hall, 50 South Main, Clarkston, UT

Attendance: Mayor N. Craig Hidalgo

Councilmembers: McCall Stephensen, Adam Hanover,
Mike Kelly, Jared Petersen

Town Clerk: Kristi Hidalgo

Public Attendance: Broden Jensen, Diana Calderwood, Brooke Coulam, Brandalin Buttars, Allyson Balls, Lyndsey Balls, Jack Edwards, Jonathan Scucchi, Simon Honey, Mike Balls, Kynlie Nelson, Shaden Buttars, Logan Fisher, Carson Fisher, Gail Godfrey

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hidalgo called the Clarkston Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor N. Craig Hidalgo led the Pledge of Allegiance and offered Reverence to begin the meeting.

Mayor Hidalgo addressed the minutes of the Clarkston Town Council Meeting held March 4, 2025. Councilmember A. Hanover motioned for the Clarkston Town Council to approve and adopt the minutes of March 4, 2025. Councilmember M. Stephensen seconded the motion. All in favor "Aye" Motion Carried.

2. BUSINESS

New Youth Councilmember Applicants – Allyson Balls - Allyson is the daughter of Mike and Stephanie Balls and is 12 years old. Miss Balls stated that she wanted to be involved in the youth council so she could be involved in the community and help other youth. She heard about the youth council from her sister Taylie Balls who currently serves on the youth council, and she thinks it will be super fun. She is most excited to help with Pony Express Days.

Broden Jensen – Broden is the son of Bob and Haley Jensen and is 13 years old. Mr. Jensen stated that he wanted to be involved with the youth council because he likes to organize events. He has some free time and feels like this would be a good place to learn how to organize his life better.

Brandalin Buttars – Brandalin is the daughter of Rodney and Jessica Buttars. Brandalin said that she wanted to get involved with the youth council so that she could connect with and help the community more. Her brother Shaden Buttars, who is currently a member of the youth council, encouraged her to serve on the youth council.

Lindsey Balls – Lindsey Balls is the daughter of Mike and Stephanie Balls and is 15 years old. Lindsey stated that the reason she wanted to be on the youth council was to develop leadership skills and work on socializing skills that she may need in the future. Miss Balls said that it would also be an amazing opportunity to help others and bring the community together. She feels there should be more community events that involve the whole community.

Carson Fisher – Carson is the son of Travis and Crystal Fisher and is 13 years old. Carson said that he wants to join the youth council so that he can serve and get to know a lot of people.

Logan Fisher - Carson is the son of Travis and Crystal Fisher and is 15 years old. Logan stated that the reason he wanted to be on the youth council was to serve others, help the community and have fun.

Mayor Hidalgo asked for a sustaining vote to appoint these youth as members of the Clarkston Town Youth Council. All in favor “Aye”. Voting was unanimously in favor of appointing these youth to the Clarkston Town Youth Council.

Swearing in New Youth Councilmembers - Town Clerk Kristi Hidalgo administered the Oath of Office to the newly appointed Clarkston Town Youth Councilmembers.

Tree Removal – Mayor Hidalgo welcomed John Scucchi owner of John the Tree Climber LLC. He is a licensed Arborist. Mayor Hidalgo invited him to the Council meeting to discuss the potential hazards of the two pine trees directly southwest of the town hall and the three pine trees on the south side of the playground. Mr. Scucchi presented a handout titled Understanding Potential Coniferous Hazards to the Council. See Attachment A Mr. Scucchi read and discussed the handout with the Council.

The following points, questions and concerns were addressed:

- The two spruce trees directly southwest of the town hall - Mr. Scucchi explained co-dominant stems. This occurs when two or more main stems emerge from the same point, creating a weak structure prone to failure, especially during storms. Mr. Scucchi stated that one of the trees has a co-dominant stem in close vicinity to another spruce. These two spruces have had lower limbs removed and have overlapping limbs which lead to disproportionate canopies. Removing the co-dominant spruce would mitigate tree failure and damage but leave the neighboring spruce isolated and without help from the other living root system and therefore increasing risk of spiral cracking or failure. Removal of both trees and then replanting trees more suitable for the area is the best choice to ensure the safety of the buildings and people in the area. Mr. Scucchi stated that last fall Mayor Hidalgo had Mr. Scucchi install a cable bracing the co-dominant stems of the one spruce tree together to temporarily mitigate and protect it from failure during the winter. This is not a permanent fix and doesn't mitigate total tree collapse. Mr. Scucchi said that with the lack of lower limbs in the trees around the town hall and secondary factors such as lawn mowers, soil erosion, and pests increase the potential for root failure and total tree collapse. Mr. Scucchi stated that these trees do pose a threat to the town hall.
- The three spruce trees on the south side of the playground – Mr. Scucchi stated that the lower counterbalance limbs have been removed on these trees. The middle pine is leaning towards the old town hall and has a disproportionate canopy. It poses a threat to that building. Considering that urbanized and modified coniferous trees are one of the most susceptible to total tree collapse, other tree species are a safer and more predictable option for public use spaces.
- Councilmember J. Petersen wondered if Mr. Scucchi could guess how old the trees are. He stated that they were probably around 80 years old.
- Councilmember M. Kelly asked Mr. Scucchi if these were his trees would he pull them out. Mr. Scucchi said that if he had this expensive of a building he absolutely would. Mayor Hidalgo stated that he is mostly concerned with the two trees by the town hall because the town hall is a

million-dollar building. A lot has been invested in it.

- Councilmember A. Hanover stated that other tree species get lower limbs cut off for one reason or another and wondered what it is about the other tree species that make them more able to handle that, without tree failure. Mr. Scucchi said that they have a tap root and can deal with wind a whole lot better. There is one dominant trunk that the limbs grow off of. Pine trees do not have tap roots. In public spaces it is always better to go with a tree that has a tap root.
- Councilmember J. Petersen wondered if another tree could be planted where a pine tree has been. He read somewhere that pine trees make the ground sterile and other trees won't grow in their place for a certain period of time. Mr. Scucchi replied that he had ground up pine stumps and then planted trees in the same place and had success. However, he wouldn't recommend planting new trees in the same place as the pines are now because they are too close to the building. The tree canopy size should be considered when planting trees by buildings.
- Councilmember M. Stephensen wondered how often trees should be trimmed and maintained. Mr. Scucchi stated that a general rule is every 3-5 years and recommended implementing an annual inspection of public trees to get a jump on certain conditions that harm trees such as pests and diseases. Mayor Hidalgo stated that in the FY 2025 General Budget he did increase the parks budget to cover maintenance on the trees.
- Mr. Scucchi recommended a full removal of all five mentioned spruce trees and reimplementation of deep-rooted tree species to mitigate potential damage to real estate and public safety. Some recommendations that would meet these criteria and compliment their environment would be Norway Maples, American Sycamores, or Gamble Oaks.
- Councilmember A. Hanover stated that Mr. Scucchi is recommending the removal of all five trees but not all five are putting the town hall in danger. Councilmember A. Hanover wondered why he was recommending that all the trees be removed. Mr. Scucchi stated that the one pine on the south end of the playground is already leaning towards the old town hall so to eliminate all potential threats to that building he recommends that all three of those trees be removed. At a minimum he recommended removing that middle leaning tree. Most likely that tree will fall over. It doesn't have lower limbs and doesn't have a counterbalance.
- Councilmember A. Hanover wondered what it would cost to remove three trees. The two by the town hall and the one leaning pine by the old town hall. Mayor Hidalgo asserted that he had not asked Mr. Scucchi to come with a cost proposal to remove the trees. Mr. Scucchi estimated that it would cost approximately \$2,500 to cut the trees down plus grapple services and disposal fees.

Mayor Hidalgo allowed public comments at this time.

- Gail Godfrey – He wondered what the pros and cons were to topping the trees rather than completely removing them. Mr. Scucchi replied that topping trees is an old, outdated method and has been replaced with new knowledge. No Arborist would recommend topping trees anymore. When you top a pine what happens is it resprouts and grows back even heavier than it originally was with one top. Multiple tops will grow out of that one spot and then the tree ends up with more weight leverage and stress on the delivery system. It also stops the trees growth because all of the growth comes from the top of the pine tree. If you cut the limbs off of a pine tree they will

not grow back. The only tree that arborists top is a fruit tree.

- Shaden Buttars – He asked what the percentage or likelihood of the trees falling within the next 50-70 years is. Mr. Scucchi stated that it is impossible to predict when tree failure will occur. Tree failure is heightened from not being maintained, from natural causes, unpredictable snow load, wind and other impacts that are completely unpredictable. Mr. Scucchi recommended building tree curbing around the trees, to create a line where landscapers stop so root systems aren't damaged by equipment causing root failure and rot. Paver retainer walls work well for this and also implement tree bark inside of them. The tree bark will retain the moisture around the tree. In drought and high temperatures, the tree can maintain its water.

Mayor Hidalgo thanked Mr. Scucchi for coming to the Council Meeting and providing nonbiased information to assist the Council in making a decision on the removal of the pine trees.

The Council further discussed the removal of the pine trees and offered the following opinions on the subject:

- Mayor Hidalgo – Stated that he looks at it from a risk standpoint and is risk adverse in this situation. He feels that the two spruce trees southwest of the town hall need to be removed to protect the town's investment in the building.
- Councilmember J. Petersen – Stated that the people of Clarkston have enjoyed the trees for a long time and is against removing them. The people of Clarkston should enjoy them as long as possible. He said it is a little too early to do it right now. It will have to happen down the road but not right now. The shade would really be missed. The trees should be enjoyed as long as they can be and not do it right now.
- Councilmember A. Hanover – Stated that he is in the risk adverse category. The cost isn't substantial and to protect the investment that has already been made in the town hall it is worth it at least for the two trees. You never know when it is going to be too late. The trees have been there for a long time and are splitting more and more. They were also planted too close together. It's better to do it now than when it's too late.
- Councilmember M. Kelly – Stated that he concurred with Councilmember A. Hanover on that. Removing the trees mitigates the hazard to the building.
- Councilmember M. Stephensen – Stated that she would like to look into a little more to better understand it. She said she would love to be able to love the trees as long as possible, but the risk is there.

Mayor Hidalgo asked for a roll call vote to approve removal of the pine trees.

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Hidalgo	<u>X</u>	Aye	___	No	___	Abstain	___	Absent
Councilmember M. Stephensen	<u>X</u>	Aye	___	No	___	Abstain	___	Absent
Councilmember A. Hanover	<u>X</u>	Aye	___	No	___	Abstain	___	Absent
Councilmember M. Kelly	<u>X</u>	Aye	___	No	___	Abstain	___	Absent
Councilmember J. Petersen	___	Aye	<u>X</u>	No	___	Abstain	___	Absent

Resolution 25-04 "A Resolution to Appoint a Land Use Authority for the Town of Clarkston, County of Cache, State of Utah" - Mayor Hidalgo read the resolution and stated that the Town must appoint a Land Use Authority because no elected official can approve applications to subdivide land. Councilmember

A. Hanover is Chairman of the Planning Commission, but he can't sign a subdivision application because he is an elected official. The Clarkston Town Land Use Authority will be one or more of the non-elected Clarkston Town Planning Commission Members. Councilmember A. Hanover stated that he had asked Vice Chair Austin Powell to be the Land Use Authority. He is an unelected official and will sign off on subdivision applications. Mayor Hidalgo asked for a motion to approve and adopt Resolution 25-04. Councilmember A. Hanover motioned for the Council to approve and adopt Resolution 25-04. Councilmember M. Stephensen seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Hidalgo	<u>X</u>	Aye	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Abstain	<u> </u>	Absent
Councilmember M. Stephensen	<u>X</u>	Aye	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Abstain	<u> </u>	Absent
Councilmember M. Kelly	<u>X</u>	Aye	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Abstain	<u> </u>	Absent
Councilmember A. Hanover	<u>X</u>	Aye	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Abstain	<u> </u>	Absent
Councilmember J. Petersen	<u>X</u>	Aye	<u> </u>	No	<u> </u>	Abstain	<u> </u>	Absent

3. DEPARTMENTS

Mayor Hidalgo – Fire Department – Mayor Hidalgo reported that he approved a Purchase Order for them to purchase Vehicle Stabilization Struts. The cost is \$2,900 and they have money in their budget for them.

Roll-off and Green Waste Dumpsters – Mayor Hidalgo reported that the Cache Waste Consortium (CWC) signed a contract with Waste Management and the contract includes a Non-Compete Clause. That means Waste Management has exclusive rights to all Solid Waste, including green waste. Utah State Legislator Casey Sneider was approached by Blue Collar Haulers and told that Waste Management has a monopoly in Cache County. Senator Sneider contacted Waste Management and threatened to take legislation against them. Mayor Hidalgo said that Waste Management is considering removing the Non-Compete Clause from the contract. Waste management has proposed taking that out of the contract if the CWC agrees to extend the contract with them for two more years. Mayor Hidalgo believes that is a good resolution and supports it because Tilio Perez can provide a green waste dumpster to the community a lot cheaper than Waste Management can. However, Logan City is now charging for green waste. The Green Waste Fee is \$25 per ton so that will affect the price of green waste services.

Councilmember M. Stephensen – Youth Council – Easter Egg Hunt - Councilmember M. Stephensen said that the youth council would be sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt on April 19, 2025. They will meet on April 12, 2025 to fill the eggs and prepare for the event.

USU Leadership Conference – Councilmember M. Stephensen reported that three youth councilmembers attended a Youth Council Leadership Conference up at Utah State University and had a great time and learned a lot.

Councilmember A. Hanover - Planning Commission – Councilmember A. Hanover reported that at the last Planning and Zoning Meeting held March 13, 2025 the commission approved a Business License Application for Heidi Fawcett. She is going to teach Crochet classes. The Planning Commission is working on a final response to the Willis Acre Subdivision Phase 2 and should have it submitted soon.

Councilmember M. Kelly – Cache County School District - Councilmember J. Petersen informed the Council that the new middle school in Hyde Park is being built and the Cache County School Board are determining which students will attend there and have set up a committee to help with this decision.

Councilmember J. Petersen wondered if Clarkston Town had been included in that committee. Mayor Hidalgo and Councilmember M. Kelly both said that they hadn't heard anything about it. Mayor Hidalgo said that he would contact the school board superintendent and find out about it. Councilmember J. Petersen said that he heard that the school board wants the children to go to the corresponding middle school. Communities that currently go to Green Canyon High School would go to the new middle school in Hyde Park and those students in communities that currently attend Sky View High School would go to North Cache Middle School.

Councilmember J. Petersen – Roads Department – Councilmember J. Petersen reported that a few sandbags had been put out by culverts to prevent flooding.

Parks Department – Councilmember J. Petersen wondered when the volleyball net, basketball nets, and ball diamond bases are usually put out. Mayor Hidalgo said to coordinate with Jeremy Hidalgo to find out when he plans on getting that done. He helps Parks Director Margie Archibald with that.

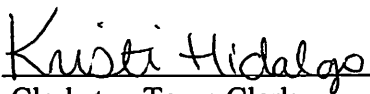
Parades – There are two parades coming up. The Smithfield Health Days Parade on May 11, 2025 at 10:00 am and the Richmond Black and White Days Parade on May 18, 2025 at 5:00 pm. It has not been determined if the Clarkston Youth Council will participate in the parades yet. Councilmember M. Stephensen will let the Town Clerk Kristi Hidalgo know as soon as possible so that Parade Entry Forms can be turned in.

4. RELEVANT BUSINESS

Next Meeting – The next Town Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday April 15, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

5. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council, Councilmember J. Petersen motioned that the Clarkston Town Council Meeting be adjourned. Councilmember M. Stephensen seconded the motion. All members present voted "Aye." Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

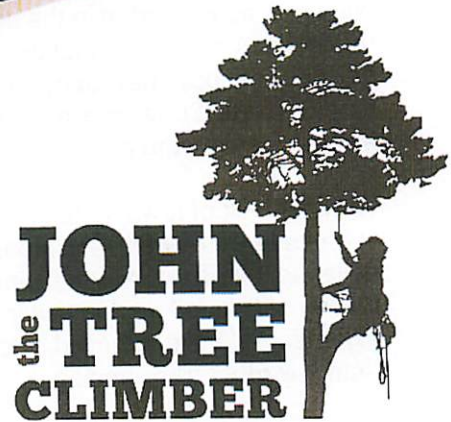


Clarkston Town Clerk



Attachment A

John the Tree Climber LLC
Fully Licensed and Insured
Jonathon Scucchi
435-705-3407



Understanding Potential Coniferous Hazards

PREPARED FOR

Craig Hidalgo
435-770-1229
clarkstonmayor@clarkstonutah.gov

PREPARED DATE

March 14,
2025

Hello Clarkston residents and city officials:

My name is Jonathon Scucchi, the owner of John the Tree Climber LLC.

My team and I are grateful for the opportunity to present to you today a further understanding of the biology, potential hazards, and site plan for your trees.

Trees are responsible for millions of dollars in property damage each year, but with correct maintenance and understanding of the threats caused by trees, most of this damage can be avoided, which is our number one goal when working with clients.

The trees that have been brought to our attention by Mayor Hidalgo are the Blue and Norway Spruces near and around the town hall. These species of trees are conifers, which have shallow root systems and no tap root, which is a single and dominant root that grows straight down from the base of the tree, providing stability. Naturally in rural areas, these trees are usually grown in large groups that use one another for stability and grounding against diverse natural circumstances. When we think about the relationship between trees in an urban environment, we have to consider the forces that they face in nature. Some of these forces include humidity, sunlight, rain, wind, snow, pests, and disease and often a combination of several.

Upon discovery I have identified varying factors on the trees in question and their potential hazards. In the natural world, Blue and Norway spruce have a potential life span of 50-200 years. To live this long, they must rely on their relationship with surrounding trees to protect against harsh environments. These trees are naturally top heavy and use one another's weight and shape to stay standing in nature's most challenging conditions. Naturally, these tree root systems span across the surface and purposely intertwine with other trees and objects, such as

rocks, to help with their stability. In nature these trees also use their shape to help counterbalance and redirect wind around them.

The lower limbs on coniferous trees are some of the most important limbs in determining their overall potential life span. These limbs are the counterbalance against wind and the first part of wind redirection. Often in the urban world, limbs are considered a nuisance because they take up space. A common solution is to remove the lower limbs to free up the space they would normally occupy. Inevitably, this technique increases the potential for root failure as the stress load from wind now becomes more apparent in the root systems. The lower limbs also supply a barrier to cover and protect the root systems, the soil, and cambium layer of the trunk.

With the lack of lower limbs in the trees in question around the town hall, secondary factors such as lawn mowers, soil erosion, and pests increase the potential for root failure and total tree collapse. Pines react to the wind like giant top heavy wind sails. One of the most common places of tree failure due to wind are open plains, such as cemeteries. In my 8 years of forestry experience, I have removed more fallen pines where tree isolation or overcrowding has occurred than any other tree species.

Weight distribution and the overall balance of the tree is also a determining terminal factor. Having a proportional tree canopy prevents twisting of the trunk and uneven weight load distribution. Disproportional tree canopy can lead to spiral cracking or root failure, a major compromise in tree health and safety.

Codominant stems on a conifer tree occur when two or more main stems emerge from the same point, creating a weak structure prone to failure, especially during storms. They are a problem due to bark inclusion and unreliable material connection that often leads to failure.

Starting with the Spruce trees to the North of the playground, we have one with a co-dominant stem in close vicinity to another spruce. These two spruces have had lower limbs removed and have overlapping limbs which lead to disproportionate canopies. Removing the co-dominant Spruce would mitigate tree failure and damage but leave the neighboring spruce isolated and without help from the other living root system and therefore increasing risk of spiral cracking or other failure. Removal of both trees and then replanting with trees more suitable for the area is the best choice to ensure the safety of the buildings and people in the area.

The Spruce to the South of the playground consists of three trees whose lower counterbalance limbs are removed as well. The middle pine is leaning towards a building and with a disproportionate canopy it could pose a threat to the structure underneath it. Considering that urbanized and modified coniferous trees are one of the most susceptible to total tree collapse, other tree species are a safer and more predictable option for public use spaces.

In conclusion, I recommend a full removal of all five mentioned Spruce trees and reimplementation of deep rooted tree species to mitigate potential damage to real estate and public safety. Some recommendations that would meet these criteria and compliment their environment would be: Norway Maples, American Sycamores, or Gamble Oaks.

Below you can find a few examples of total tree collapse and codominant failure in Coniferous trees from job sites in Cache Valley and surrounding areas.







**CLARKSTON TOWN
RESOLUTION 25-04**

**A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT A LAND USE AUTHORITY FOR THE
TOWN OF CLARKSTON, COUNTY OF CACHE, STATE OF UTAH.**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Utah Code 10-9A-604.1; municipalities are required to appoint a Land Use Authority to review and approve applications to subdivide land; and

WHEREAS, a Land Use Authority cannot include a municipal legislative body or a member of a municipal legislative body; and

WHEREAS, the Clarkston Town Council has determined that the Land Use Authority for Clarkston Town will be one or more of the non-elected Clarkston Town Planning Commission Members.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor of Clarkston with the advice and consent of the Clarkston Town Council, that one or more of the non-elected Clarkston Town Planning Commission Members are appointed to be the Land Use Authority for Clarkston Town.

Adopted and effective this day by motion from Councilmember Adam Hanover and seconded by Councilmember Jared Petersen and all approved.

Dated this 18th day of March 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Hidalgo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aye	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent
Councilmember M. Stephensen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aye	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent
Councilmember A. Hanover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aye	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent
Councilmember M. Kelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aye	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent
Councilmember J. Petersen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aye	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent

N. Gaing Hidalgo
MAYOR

ATTEST:

Kristi Hidalgo
CLERK

