

Winterville Tree Commission

Mon., March 28, 2022, 5:00 PM
in the Pavilion at Pittard Park

Meeting Minutes

Present: Brian Binder (Secretary), Bob Bonsall (Treasurer), Lea Clark, Tina Mills,
Dorset Trapnell
Guests: Ken Doud, Eric Cleveland

Meeting Chair: Bob Bonsall

Welcome New Member

Tina Mills was appointed to the Tree Commission by the City Council at their last meeting. Tina has considerable experience with trees and landscaping. Welcome Tina!

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Jan. 31, 2022 meeting were approved without objection.

Arbor Day 2022 – Sun. Feb 20 (information item)

This event went well. Seth's tree was planted, but Bob reports that it's not looking too happy at the moment. ► Lea will have a look at it.

► Lea will send Brian some pictures for posting on our web page.

Tree Species List

Lea has compared the ACC list with ours, and finds that before this last round of (minor) changes to the ACC list, the two were identical. She recommends that we change the Winterville list to conform with the current ACC list.

QR codes

Bob found a vender ("Camcode") who sells weather-resistant tags. The idea would be to tag public trees with QR codes so that information about the tree could be accessed on-line from the tree database that we're building.

Gazette Entry

Thanks Mateo, for putting together the March entry. ► We should discuss the next entry (June request) at our May meeting. Possible topics include the CTP and canopy preservation.

Marigold Festival Booth

The idea is to let people know who we are and what we do, to educate them about trees, and to recruit potential new members to the WTC.

► Tina and Lea volunteered to get this together. Lea will arrange for the booth space (on-line application) and can provide a tent and table from GFC.

Annual Report to City Council (information item)

Lea submitted a written report (appended here) and presented the highlights in-person at the March 8, 2022 City Council meeting. Council members were interested and enthusiastic, and particularly happy that our tree canopy experienced no net loss between 2016 and 2021.

Cedars in Wesley Whitehead Square

During her report to Council, Lea was asked about providing a plaque for the cedars, and asked if she could determine if they are Cedars of Lebanon, as purported. Holly is probably the best qualified to do this.

[3/30/22 Update: Holly has determined that these trees are deodar cedars.

From her 3/30/22 email:

“The two cedars by City Hall are deodar cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) because of their needle length. Cedars of Lebanon (which these trees were reported to be and donated as) have shorter needles and don't grow well in GA. I had back up ID support on these trees from Dr. Scott Merkle (Warnell dendrology instructor). We had a Cedar Lebanon cutting and another deodar cedar tree cutting to compare needle length. The Winterville trees were identical to the deodar cutting and not at all like the Cedar of Lebanon cutting. Dr. Merkle and I both agreed they are deodar cedars.”]

Georgia Tree Council Meetings in May and November (Lea)

The May meeting is on May 11, 2022 in Alpharetta (with a virtual option). The theme is Storm Water Management. The November meeting will be in Rome, GA Nov. 2-3, 2022. The GFC has scholarships (covering registration) available for the November meeting for tree board members. Bob suggested that our Commemorative Tree Program would be a good subject for a talk at that meeting. No volunteers came forward, but ► we should keep this in mind as the date approaches.

The Storm Water Management theme of the May meeting could be a venue for exploring the idea of offering credits on stormwater fees as incentives for planting/maintaining trees. Since these are county fees, ► Bob will discuss this idea with members of the ACC Community Tree Council.

Tree Inventory

We are moving ahead with a new Winterville tree inventory. Holly has agreed to have 3 – 4 students spend 4 or 5 hrs inventorying trees as an instructional activity. As part of their project, the students would make a presentation to us at a WTC meeting sometime between May 25 and June 6 (June would be best for us). In addition to these students, Lea says that a GFC intern will be able to complete any work that the students are unable to get to. The inventory would ideally include commemorative trees, trees in the City's 'central campus,' and trees in Pittard Park. Discussion of what data should be collected, and which software platform would be best to use. Holly will figure out what works best; we ultimately need to be able to export the data to Excel, so Bob can access and work on it.

Commemorative Tree Program (1): Update Brochure

The price of trees has increased substantially, making the \$100 suggested donation too low to cover the cost. Raising the donation to say \$150 might be prohibitive for many people. It was suggested that we could establish two tiers: (i) Plant a new tree – higher donation, (ii) ‘sponsor’ an existing city tree – lower donation.

Planting sites are also becoming a problem: there are few or no sites remaining on Main St. or adjacent to the Firefly Trail. One possibility is to plant trees on private property (especially. e.g. Church or Business properties), but this would require us to create a ‘contract’ of some sort guaranteeing public access, etc.

Finally, it has to be made clear to donors that trees will only be planted in late winter / early spring in order to ensure their survival and vigor.

▶ Bob will draft a new CTP brochure addressing these issues.

Commemorative Tree Program (2): Maintenance

There are now over 150 CTP trees, including the 24 planted this year in the region of the old Frisbee course. City Works cannot keep all these trees mulched and although they are skilled with string trimmers, there is always the risk of bark damage. In the absence of a city arborist, one solution would be for the City to purchase and install some trunk protector rings. An alternative would be to have an active volunteer tree steward program (as discussed in previous meetings) to look after the trees. For now, it was suggested that we organize a work day to mulch and maintain CTP trees. There was a consensus that we do this.

▶ Bob will talk to Tom about trunk protector rings.

▶ Lea will see if Susan Russell (Jefferson city arborist) might be willing to serve as Winterville arborist part-time.

Work day is set for Sat. Apr. 23, 2022 at 8:00 AM, meeting at Chandler Park

▶ Brian will put on web site, city calendar, and (hopefully) get it on the marquee

▶ Lea will bring mulch & tools from GFC

▶ Others will bring tools & wheelbarrows

▶ Food & Drink (tentatively: Bob: a snack; Brian: Coffee; others?)

Changes to the Tree Ordinance

From Bob: “Although one of the most important roles of the WTC is to protect the City’s tree canopy, the current ordinance provides no means of doing this other than educating the public. The current permitting program does not involve the WTC but rather requires a city arborist to work with P&Z. One possibility that would avoid the permitting hassle altogether and replace it with a reporting requirement for tree removals on both residential and commercial property. If a healthy tree is removed that contributed significantly to the canopy, it would need to be replaced with a suitable and approved species. The replacement could be planted on the landowners property, on another landowner’s property or by arrangement with the WTC. Landowners who wished to receive trees under the replacement program would register with the WTC. Under any of these circumstances, replacement trees would have protected status.”

Discussion regarding the difficulty of enacting ordinances that address tree issues on private, residential property, and of the relative merits and acceptability of a permit system vs. this sort of replacement requirement.

▶ Lea will draft a new section of the Tree Ordinance based on the replacement idea. We can discuss further and ultimately decide if we wish to propose to the City Council that they consider incorporating this into the ordinance.

Our next meeting is set for Mon., May 2, 2022 at 5:30 PM at the Pittard Park pavilion.

▶ Tina will put together the agenda and run this meeting.

The meeting ended at 6:30 PM.

Winterville Tree Commission

2021 List of Accomplishments

Voting Members: 5

Lea Clark (Chair)

Bob Bonsall (Treasurer)

Dorsett Trapnell

Brian Binder (Secretary)

Mateo Fennell (starting July, 2021)

Ex-officio Members:

Holly Campbell, Daniel B. Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Seth Hawkins, Georgia Forestry Commission (until July, 2021 when he moved to Rome)

Mateo Fennell (until July, 2021)

Tom Doonan, City Works Manager

Total Number of 2021 Meetings

Six, including five virtual and four public meetings

Specific Activities

Arbor Day February 20, 2021

The Winterville Tree Commission held an Arbor Day celebration and Bald Cypress tree planting at the wildlife area of Pittard Park with members of the Commission, the Mayor, and general public. Seth Hawkins of GFC led an informational tree planting demonstrative. Pictures from the event were featured on the city's website in 2021.

Tree City USA, Growth Award, and Tree City of the World

Winterville retained its certification as a Tree City, USA by the Arbor Day Foundation and received the Growth Award for the second year for extra activities performed during the year. The extra activities in 2021 were tree plantings, an excellent planting to removal ratio, and an iTree Canopy study in January that showed Winterville has 57% canopy cover, reflecting no net loss since 2016.

In 2021, Winterville received recognition as a Tree City of the World, the fourth city in Georgia to achieve this status.

Commemorative Trees – plantings and inventory

Plantings of Commemorative Trees with memorial dedication plaques on Main Street and near the Depot continued during 2021.

The Commemorative Trees were added to the Athens-Clarke County's tree inventory. This inventory helps track the trees' vigor and maintenance needs. In addition, the commission maintains a workbook on Google Sheets with photographs, GPS coordinates, and species of each commemorative tree together with honoree and donor information.

The Tree Commission coordinated the memorial plaques that are placed at each Commemorative Tree, and worked with special situation donors to achieve their memorial goals (Patsy Chandler and Rosalind Nash).

Marigolds and Tree plantings

Several thousand marigolds were planted to beautify our city for the Marigold Festival, which was held virtually in 2021, and the ongoing weekly Marigold Market days.

Changes to the Tree Commission in 2021

Holly Campbell moved out of the city limits and became an ex-officio member. Seth Hawkins of the Georgia Forestry Commission was an ex-officio member until he moved to Rome. Lea Clark (2021 Chairperson of the Tree Commission) was hired by GFC to take Seth's place. Mateo Fennell was an ex-officio member until July, when he resigned as City Arborist and rejoined the Tree Commission as a voting member.

Educational Event

An educational event with speakers on the topics of Increasing Our Canopy and Arborisculpture was set and publicized for September 18 at the Depot. Because of the rise in COVID variant cases, the event was canceled.

Memorial Event at Opening of George Chandler Park

An event featuring family members of George Chandler and their Commemorative Trees was set to coincide with the opening of George Chandler Park in October. Because of the rise in COVID variant cases, the event was canceled.

Tree ID Walk on the Athens Greenway

The Tree Commission partnered with the Athens Tree Council to organize a Tree Identification Walk on the Athens Greenway in October. Several small, socially distanced groups started at Sandy Creek Nature Center and learned about trees at the park. The event was well attended and considered a success.

TSPLOST Recommendation

The Tree Commission made a formal recommendation to the Citizens' Advisory Council to use TSPLOST money for a walking trail on the perimeter of the wildlife area of Pittard Park.

Gazette Entries

Each quarter of publication, the Tree Commission offered an entry to the Winterville Gazette to inform residents of our public meetings, upcoming events, and general tree information, including Champion Trees in Winterville.

Plans and Achievements for 2022:

Retain designations of Tree City USA, Growth Award, and Tree City of the World (this was done in January, 2022)

Add new members (one was added in February, 2022)

Arbor Day celebration and tree planting was held in February, 2022

Continue quarterly Gazette entries

MLK Day of Service in January, 2022 was cancelled due to snow, ice, and windy conditions.

The tree species list in Winterville's Tree Canopy ordinance will be updated.

Obtain a booth at the Marigold Market

Update the tree inventory of both Commemorative Trees and city-owned trees in Summer, 2022, possibly using interns from GFC. Work continues to create a publicly accessible database of the trees.

Coordinate with the City Works Department to monitor tree health and perform pruning and other light tasks as necessary.

Coordinate with the City Works Department to plan the planting of new commemorative trees and assist with the planting operation.