

Winterville Tree Commission
Thursday, February 21, 2019
Meeting Minutes
Averil and Bob Bonsall's Residence

Present: Holly Campbell, Bob Bonsall, Averil Bonsall, Roger Cauthen

Approval of January Minutes: The January meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Winterville Arbor Day (February 20th) Tree Planting: (Bob)

- For the record – Many thanks and our great admiration for the work of Roger, Tom, and Steve. They are a good team.
- There were about 30 participants (despite the gloomy weather), many of whom were veterans and other tree donors of the Commemorative Tree Program.
- Roger and Holly took photos for documentation.
- Seth did a good demo of tree-planting, emphasizing the need for the root flare to be slightly higher than ground level (1-2 inches).
- Maintenance along the Main Street easement is to be done By ACC. It was recommended that tree collars should be placed around the trees to protect them against weed-whackers.
- It was suggested that we invite a journalist from the local newspaper next year. This year a report will be written for the Winterville Gazette. Also, the report can be sent to the National Arbor Day. (Roger will do this? - he has a generic “blurb” (**attached**) and photo that were handed out at the State Arbor Day Recognition ceremony.)
- Related to this, it was suggested that a history of the older Winterville trees be produced, with stories and pictures. This would make a good campaign some time – and could be done digitally, but also as a printed copy.

Status of Commemorative Tree Program, State Arbor Day Recognition: (Roger)

- The Program has picked up over the last two months, both from individual donations, and from organizations.
- It was noted that the donated trees do not only commemorate past lives. Most have been given to honor people and/or events, and some are donated to represent organizations e.g. Winterville Community Garden.
- As trees are donated, it will be possible to continue planting along Main Street, but also in other locations, e.g. around the Community Center and Auditorium. It is anticipated that eventually we could plant several hundred trees with most of the costs being covered by the Commemorative Tree Program.
- An archive book will be kept in the library. Athens Regional Library Heritage Room houses the Athens Archive book, and this could be used as a model for Winterville. It could also be located on the City website. Further ideas will be discussed e.g. include QR codes, maybe use i-tree.

Winterville Elementary School Arbor Day activity: (Averil)

- A meeting was held at the school on February 1st with Dr. Elder (School Principal), Jim Willingham, Ric Carlson (teachers), Holly and Averil to work out details.
- The school calendar is very full, and it will not be possible to hold this event on National Arbor Day (Friday, April 26) as we had hoped. The closest date that works for everyone is Tuesday, April 30th.
- The 2nd and 3rd grade classes were chosen to participate, and their teachers will do some preparatory work with them, including reading a book about trees. On April 30th we will set up three stations dealing with different tree topics, and the two grade levels will each be divided into three groups and rotate amongst these. There will be 40 minutes per grade level to complete this.
- A meeting to finalize details will be held at the school on Thursday, March 21st, at 1 pm.
- The minutes from this meeting are attached.

WTC Tree Tour (Saturday, April 27th): (Holly)

- April 27th was finally chosen as the date for this event, because it is the best time for the principle speaker, Dr. Merkle, and is the day when most of the Commission can be present.
- This will be a Tree ID tour, lasting about one hour.
- It was decided that 4 pm would be a good starting time.
- If Dodd is in town, we will hold a reception on his front porch, and the tour will start 30 minutes later.
- Holly will prepare a flyer in early March, by which time the starting plans will have been decided.
- Seth will be able to provide publications for hand-out, and perhaps tree seedlings.
- Flyers will be distributed around Winterville and Athens.
- It was suggested that we ask Athens Tree Council to co-sponsor this. Roger will contact them. It was also suggested that we invite Rodney Walters, the ACC Community Forester, to one of our meetings to discuss joint efforts.
- Holly and Dr. Merkle will map out a route.
- We will put out a sign-in sheet, which will give us a contact list.

Firefly Construction Update: (Roger)

- There is no good target date for beginning of construction. Latest info from Dodd would suggest April-May. Roger will try to get a more definitive date. If it gets close to the date of the Marigold Festival we will ask for it to start after this.
- Still to be completed – construction documents, bid-process (4-6 weeks). Biggest hang-up is getting the final easement agreements from the adjacent owners. S Georgia to Dozier – some conflict as to who owns that property. Will require more time. So not likely to start before Marigold Festival.
- Therefore there will be more time than we originally thought to get information out to the public.

- The 25' right-of-way (permanent easement) will be owned by ACC, **not** Winterville i.e. ACC has ownership, Winterville only has input.
- ACC Tree Board, Leisure Services will provide maintenance on leisure areas. Could have a letter of agreement to say that Winterville will maintain areas outside the 25' easement.
- The project management level and future annual maintenance level are the responsibility of ACC. The level of maintenance is fairly simple.
- We could also include a gateway type of landscaping at entry to Winterville, and pockets of landscape throughout.

Public Information: (Roger)

- Dodd has asked that we do not rush this.
- Tree ID signs are OK – giving info about the individual trees, including signs such as “this is a saved tree”.
- It is probably a violation of the Winterville sign ordinance to put signs on street posts.
- Could write a piece for the Gazette about the vision - what will happen – about saved trees in general. Perhaps with the Firefly Trail program coordinator?
- Could do a graphic presentation of changes over 3-5 years – including the effects of forest thinning.
- Could present some info at the upcoming Town Hall meetings e.g. SPLOST meeting, Farmers' Market meeting, emphasizing the role of the Tree Commission in protecting the tree canopy.
- Could do a report and tree planting pictures – plus upcoming events - in the Gazette.

Next meeting – Thursday, March 28th, 7:30 a.m. (breakfast at the Bonsalls)