

**Winterville Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 30, 2018**

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

This meeting was held to clarify the responsibilities of the Tree Commission as set out in the Winterville Tree Ordinance. As an introductory comment, Roger told us that Connie Head (Consulting Urban Forester, Technical Forestry Services & Georgia Urban Forest Council), who spear-headed the original planning of the Winterville Tree Ordinance, had followed the ACC Ordinance as a guide, and the Winterville Tree Commission can make changes to our own Ordinance, with City Council approval, if it seems necessary.

Bob set out a list of Action Items corresponding with Section 1, Section 7 of the Tree Ordinance and these are our discussion points from that list:

1. Appointment of Ex Officio Members – this appears to be the commission’s responsibility.
 - a. There are already three ex-officio members – Roger, Dodd, and Tom. It would be useful to have Seth Hawkins as a member, and Holly said she would extend an invitation to him.
2. Calendar of Meetings (at least quarterly)
 - a. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 23rd, and the main topic will be a debriefing of the Tree Tour.
 - b. It was agreed that we should hold monthly meetings – every 4th Monday, at 7:45 a.m., but this can vary depending on Tree Commission members’ work schedules.
3. Election of Officers. (Not clear if ex officio members can be officers – ordinance does not forbid it)
 - a. It was agreed that with only three Commission members, and since the Tree Ordinance does not forbid it, it would make sense to have ex-officio members as officers. Officers were duly elected:
 - Chair – Holly
 - Vice-Chair – Bob
 - Secretary – Averil
 - Treasurer – Roger (as City Arborist, and so has closer contact with the official running of the City)
 - b. Given that the activities of the City Arborist overlap with those of the Commission, it was suggested that Roger become a voting member of the Commission. (This would involve a change in the Ordinance.)
4. Adoption of bylaws (?)
 - a. Currently bylaws have not been set up. Holly agreed to draft our by-laws, and we will discuss them by email.
5. Record keeping. (How official is this?)
 - a. Records are useful to have available for any future business.
6. Does the tree commission have a budget?
 - a. There is no mention of funding for the Commission in the 2018 City Budget, nor in the Tree Ordinance.
 - b. Roger pointed out that the City is committed to the Tree Commission, and it would be acceptable to request a small amount in next year’s budget (prepared in June/July) for the Tree Commission activities such as the Tree Tour, Commemorative Tree Program.

- c. To do this, we should put together our funding requirements for next year.
 - d. We are a public entity associated with Winterville, and rather than apply to become a tax-exempt/non-profit organization, which is difficult to set up, we should ask for a separate accounting line in the City budget.
 - e. We also discussed methods of raising money. Ideas included sponsorships, marketing programs, Commemorative Tree Program (already in existence, but not currently providing funding), and a Baby Tree Program (as a subset of the Commemorative Program – so that even after a family has moved from Winterville, there will be a tree commemorating a baby’s birth).
 - f. Also, at this point, we discussed the need to have a **web presence**. There is currently no mention of the Tree Commission on the City Website, and so nowhere for Winterville residents to find out about the Commission. Averil offered to talk to JoAnn Snow (the City Webmaster) about this, and get a page set up.
7. Develop landmark tree program
- a. Holly suggested that we should look to GFC and National Standards.
 - b. **Landmark tree.** *Any tree 18 inches DBH or larger on undeveloped properties; any healthy tree officially designated by the tree commission at the request of the tree owner as a community landmark due to its species, size, configuration, historical significance or other notable characteristic. (Definition from Winterville Tree Ordinance)*
 - c. We discussed how to make having a landmark tree advantageous to current residents e.g. Roger suggested offering special arborist services; Bob suggested arranging discounts with reputable tree care companies.
 - d. From The City Tree Ordinance – stating how developers can get canopy credit for landmark trees:
 - 14.12. On all lots, landmark trees proposed for conservation shall be eligible for a bonus amount of tree canopy cover of 20 percent. For example, 1,000 square feet of actual tree canopy cover originating from a landmark tree may be counted as 1,200 square feet.*
 - 14.13. When a landmark tree that has been conserved in accordance with an approved tree canopy plan is removed from a property with an approved tree removal permit, the amount of tree canopy cover it was assigned—including the bonus amount—shall be replaced on the site during the next planting season after removal.*
 - 14.14. When a landmark tree that has been conserved in accordance with an approved tree canopy plan is removed from a property without an approved tree removal permit, the tree shall be replaced with two (2) times the amount of tree canopy cover it was assigned, including the bonus amount.*
 - e. Bob suggested that we should look into forest areas to be designated as “landmark forests” for the sake of preserving them.
 - f. A self-guided tour of special Winterville trees could be developed – map of trees, smart phone app. e.g. Bus tour to “Experience the Trees of Winterville”; in late Spring when it’s a little warmer – “Step into Spring with Winterville”; a tour during Fall color season.
 - g. A brochure could be developed for landowners to apply for landmark status for a tree – Why? – pride, status. And for developers – as stated in the Tree Ordinance (see above)
 - h. New Urban Forestry has a program already set up to do this. *(At our following meeting about the Tree Tour site, Art Morris expressed great interest to Holly, Bob, and Averil, and said he would love to help with the landmark program and follow-up tours.)*
 - i. This could be made into a project one year – brochure, approach landowners with suggestion.
 - j. This could feature in a quarterly newsletter.
8. Develop a “community tree management program plan” (what is this?)
- a. The City Arborist acts as an Extension Agent and can suggest tree needs; complete survey of property.

- b. Holly suggested that Roger take the lead on this since it is more his realm, and we partner.
9. Annual tree care education program. (=tree walk + arbor day planting)
 - a. We have a well-defined set of activities as set out in the Ordinance. The role of the City in maintaining the condition of trees, improve planting, pruning etc. in partnership with the Tree Commission as a checkpoint to give authorization/approval.
10. Potential violations of tree ordinance — implies need to monitor Winterville activities (how?)
 - a. Winterville now has a Code Enforcement Officer (Captain Al Figueroa), and he can be called out to follow up on violations.
 - b. It was suggested that he should be invited to become an ex-officio member of the Tree Commission.
11. Prepare annual report (to council?) detailing activities (due when?)
 - a. This would be due on the second Tuesday of December.
 - b. It could be posted on the City website as a series of six or so points.
12. Prepare and submit Tree City USA application.
 - a. The City Arborist (Roger) prepares this, with the approval of the Commission (as a symbolic duty!)
 - b. Roger told us Seth Hawkins is our conduit for this.
 - c. When is this due? The Tree City application was submitted in Nov/Dec last year, and the plaque presented at Arbor Day this year. Roger and Seth will update this each year.
 - d. We need a copy of the original application (what was promised?) Roger will forward this to Holly, who will send it out to Bob and Averil.
13. "It shall be unlawful for any person....." - Do we need some sort of official ID?
 - a. This was discussed, but not finalized.

Other discussion:

- Using a Google Drive for documents – have hard copies, but also on-line.
- Possibly increase the number of members of the Tree Commission (Decided that 3 is good for start-up).
- When we do add more members, we should develop sub-committees for different areas
- Think about articles for the next Gazette – e.g. Arbor Day, Tree Tour (with photos); the goals of the Tree Commission, introduce the Tree Commission.
- A presence at the Marigold Festival? Probably not a booth this year, but possibly having brochures/flyers at the City Info. Booth. Also have posters attached to a few major trees in Pittard Park listing the benefits they provide for us.