

Winterville Tree Commission
Thursday, May 2, 2019
Meeting Minutes
Averil and Bob Bonsall's Residence

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

Approval of March 28 Minutes: The March meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

WTC Tree Tour (Saturday, April 27, 4-6 p.m.) – Recap

We all agreed that:

- The weather was perfect – sunny and breezy, not too hot
- Good time to hold a tree tour – season and time of day
- Dr. Merkle's timing of the tour was impeccable!
- Wonderful turnout! Sign-in sheet attached (62, including the WTC members). It was felt that not everyone signed in (Roger counted 75), so the total number of participants was between 62 and 75.
- The use of a microphone was important with such a large group.
- We briefly discussed whether we should charge for our next Tree Tour since so many participants expressed surprise that the event and raffle tickets were free. It was felt that making it free is more in line with the purpose of the tour, but it certainly wouldn't hurt to put out a donation jar!
- Seth provided two good-sized saplings (a dogwood and a white oak), and there were three other smaller prizes. Roger also offered a one hour consultation, which delighted the winner!
- Seth provided some great informational hand-outs, and Roger brought Commemorative Tree Program brochures.
- We all provided snacks and drinks, and it was suggested that we provide an invoice for Mayor Ferrelle so that he is aware of our efforts and our need for funds.
- We discussed an alternative plan in case of rain, but the feeling was that an event under shelter couldn't take the place of the tour, and in case of heavy rain it would be better to cancel.
- The Grady School of Journalism came out to do a video interview and highlight of the tour with Dr. Merkle and Holly.
- Several people indicated that they had learned of this event from various sources, including ABH newspaper, Flagpole, Social media, Winterville listserv, WUGA radio, flyers, Winterville Community Garden.
- A follow up email from Dr. Merkle to Holly is attached as a separate sheet.

Winterville Elementary School program for State Arbor Day - Recap

- The program was held on Tuesday April 30, starting at 8:15 a.m.
- Seth, Holly, and Averil did presentations to 2nd and 3rd grade groups (A total of 120-140 students). Seth's was done to two Grade-level groups, the others in four groups of about 30 students each.
- Topics included Tree Care, Tree ID, Tree Biology.
- Though it was hot and sunny out, students seemed interested in the various activities, asking several questions.
- This event was planned with the school principal and several teachers. If we repeat the event next year, it may be done differently, with smaller class sizes for any activities or reading a tree book for a single class. We felt smaller classes and/ or indoor activities may be better for students to maximize their learning.

- The trees planted on Georgia Arbor Day in February are all looking good, and arrangements have been made to keep them watered. *(Update from Roger and Seth – The Winterville Fire Department watered most of the trees (after school hours, and with Dr. Elder’s approval) – there were a few that they couldn’t reach. Dr. Elder will arrange for volunteers from the school to water the trees over the summer. The final project report states that with hoses and gator bags the trees will be watered by school staff/volunteers over the summer, and will be watered with the help of community volunteers during the school year.)*

Report on Commemorative Trees (Roger)

The Commemorative Tree Program received funds for 23 trees from the Winterville Civitan Club – one for each founding member.

Updating the Tree Ordinance

It was agreed that simply changing the maximum number of Tree Commission members from three to five or seven should not be a major issue, and we will approach the Mayor and City Council about this sometime over the next couple of months.

SPLOST (Bob – member of the Winterville SPLOST Citizens Advisory Committee)

- There was much general discussion about SPLOST (a ten-year plan, which will be included in the next election) and T-SPLOST (The first check for Winterville will come in at the end of May).
- The Tree Commission cannot enforce the conditions of the Tree Ordinance except where it applies to non-residential areas and construction. It was felt that an alternative way to protect our tree canopy would be to use SPLOST money for green space acquisition, to be used for wild-life corridors and walking trails and parks, which could be developed by the City over the next several years.
- The most sensitive areas include along waterways, wetlands
- It seems that Winterville Station is voluntarily starting to develop walking trails in the subdivision, and it would be of interest to look at what they are doing.
- Tree conservation in residential developments could be helped by interconnecting with non-developable land.
- Conservation easements? Perhaps it is possible to group small areas into a single easement to provide wild-life corridors and walking trails.
- Clarke County has a greenway network plan to provide such corridors, and a history of acquiring green space for this.
- Would it be possible to develop a Land Trust from e.g. donations of non-usable land from developers? Tax complications?
- It might be better to break free from controversial issues and look at environmental benefits, but the question is how to do this.
- Lea offered to use her expertise to research Greenway Network Plans and Land Trusts.

Next meeting – Thursday, June 13, 7:30 a.m. (breakfast at the Bonsalls)

Hi Holly:

It was my pleasure to do the tree walk. What an enjoyable group of people! There were more folks in the group who I knew than I expected. Since Saturday, I have had 2 emails from participants with comments or questions and I ran into one lady in the Tractor Supply parking lot yesterday who told me how much she enjoyed it.

Thanks very much for the wine from Sonoma Valley and the dark chocolate-almond bar. Did someone tell you I was a chocoholic?

I did make it over to Southern Brewery for some of the American Chestnut Foundation event there. The chestnut brew (Mighty Giant Chestnut Ale) was pretty good—it is a good thing I was not at the brewery for longer, actually...

Scott