

WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY TREE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE SUBSTANTIVE BIOLOGICAL, MANAGEMENT, AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

During the spring of 2006, members of the Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Tree Ordinance Committee were interviewed by the committee's facilitator for the purpose of gathering information about stakeholders and their interests, the issues to be addressed, and issues related to collaboration and consensus. The results of those interviews were documented in an assessment report (Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Tree Ordinance Committee Issue and Stakeholder Assessment). From those interviews a number of concerns, aspirations, and needs were elicited. These were initially grouped into six general categories in the assessment report: purpose and need for an ordinance; procedural considerations; identifying the 'right' trees; mechanics of tree protection; capturing the benefits of trees; and implementation, staffing, inspection, and reviews. The committee members were also asked about what they thought should be included (or not included) in an ordinance. These ideas aligned closely with the important issues previously defined.

Upon analysis of the interview responses, a list of nine substantive (as opposed to procedural) issues emerged. These nine issues are listed below. Following each issue are actions or concepts that committee members stated should be included in the committee's recommendations. Each of these statements can be considered a means for resolving the particular issue. Some statements are more directive and actionable than others.

Issue: Protecting the Canopy & Woodlands

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *Establish city and county tree canopy policy and goals.*
- *If we decide to protect existing trees, we need to define an understandable and obtainable way.*
- *Be realistic with respect to size of lots and what can be placed on a lot. We say we want infill, but this could further dampen the possibilities of this being achieved.*
- *The goal should be to protect the tree canopy.*
- *Increase contiguous tree stands.*
- *Emphasis on saving existing trees and continuous wooded areas especially along streams and locations that connect to other wooded areas.*
- *Establish standards for woodland conservation.*

Issue: Specifying Trees, Tree Type, & Species

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *Need to include recommended species types. Need to prevent planting of some invasive species.*
- *Need to have guidelines on diameter classes to protect. Don't necessarily need to protect the biggest trees.*
- *Define and conserve significant and heritage trees.*
- *Require tree surveys of land to be developed.*

- *Determining which trees to cut and not cut.*

Issue: Identifying Location and Scope

- *Most feel that residential development needs to come under whatever ordinance is ultimately crafted.*
- *[Provide] tree preservation requirements for residential and commercial construction.*
- *Include all property in this tree ordinance: private and public, residential and commercial.*
- *Making sure that residential areas are included.*

Issue: Replanting Trees

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *If we decide to replant trees, we need to do the same in an understandable and obtainable way.*
- *Encourage systematic tree plantings.*
- *Establish standards for planting and tree maintenance.*

Issue: Pruning Trees

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *Prohibit topping of trees.*
- *Pruning Standards improved. Correct pruning cuts, no topping*

Issue: Developing Lots

- *Prohibit clear cutting of lots.*
- *State steps to take to protect trees during construction.*

Issue: Providing Incentives

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *There may be other ways to get to our goal such as conservation subdivisions, incentives. We should broaden the range of possibilities.*
- *Provide attractive incentives for property owners to meet and go beyond our minimum requirements including easements.*

Issue: Specifying Implementation and Enforcement

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *Build on existing buffer yard and motor vehicle landscape ordinance.*
- *Specific language for implementation.*
- *[Include] enforcement provisions. Need to look at all the tools available.*

- *Be enforceable.*
- *Need to identify who will police the ordinance and how it will be funded.*
- *Need to look at existing standards, such as DOT regulations or other regulations, to see if they hinder achievement of tree conservation goals.*
- *Establish reasonable penalties and fines that would rectify problems and go into a fund established for public education of the ordinance and the benefits to the community of trees and tree canopy.*

Issues: Identifying the Value and Benefits of Trees

Means for Resolving Issue:

- *Establish the benefits of trees and tree canopy and encourage education of the public about those benefits.*
- *Establish economic values of trees.*