



May 11, 2004

Hon. Mayor Heidi Davison  
Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County  
City Hall  
Athens, Georgia 30601

RE: Tree Ordinance Recommendations

Dear Mayor Davison:

Following the responsibilities invested in the Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council (CTC) as established by Ordinance Section 1-22-1, the CTC is responding to your request to suggest policy changes that would increase the quality and quantity of tree canopy in Athens-Clarke County.

After reviewing the existing A-CC Development Code, researching information from other communities, and surveying stakeholders in the Athens-Clarke community, two key issues have emerged that seem critical to the continued environmental and economic health of Athens-Clarke County in regards to its tree canopy.

*The first priority is to require conservation of some amount of existing trees on new development.*

*The second key issue is to establish a minimum requirement of healthy tree canopy on new single family residential developments.*

To accomplish improvements in both of these areas the CTC is recommending that

- 1) A Tree Ordinance is created as a stand-alone document and administered under the Athens-Clarke County Central Services Department, Landscape Management Division.

- 2) That the charge of creating this Tree Ordinance be assigned to A-CC staff, so that it effectively works in tandem with other Ordinances to enhance the health of our county's soil, water and air quality.

The Community Tree Council Information and Design Committee has worked diligently in the last seven months to receive comprehensive tree ordinance information from a wide range of sources. We also surveyed Athens citizens and included representation from the Athens development community as we worked on potential changes to our existing laws. Our policy recommendations for a new Tree Ordinance are reflected in the attached Appendix A – Recommended Guidelines for a Tree Ordinance. This information is intended to guide the Tree Ordinance composer(s) towards a document that will achieve the goals of the greater Athens community.

The members of the Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council respectfully ask for your attention to our recommendations. We continue to offer our time and energy in providing information, and educating the citizens of Athens about issues that relate to the health of our community forest, and look forward to offering continued support in the creation of a Tree Ordinance.

Sincerely,

David Kidd, President  
Community Tree Council

Maureen O'Brien  
Info. and Design Committee Chair

Cc: reddish  
martin  
griffin