Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Tree Ordinance Committee Meeting Summary

June 6, 2006
City Hall South, Winston-Salem, NC

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Draft Date: 07/12/06 Approval Date: 07/19/06

Attendance
Glenn Cobb  Winston-Salem Homebuilders Association & Winston-Salem Regional Association of Realtors
Melynda Dunigan  Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance
Ken Fleming  Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce
Fred Holbrook  Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Inspections Division
Keith Huff  City of Winston-Salem Stormwater
Glynis Jordan  City-County Planning Board
Evie Katsoudas  Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce
Paul McGill  McGill Realty
James Mitchell  City of Winston-Salem, Vegetation Management
James Moore  Community Appearance Commission
Elizabeth O’Meara  Sierra Club
Bob Ragland  Forsyth County Environmental Affairs
Keith Rogers  Keith Rogers Homes
Lynda Schwan  City-County Planning Board
Tamieka White  Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods
Rosetta Williams  Waughtown Neighborhood Association

Meeting Agenda
1. Welcome, introductions, agenda review
2. Report on Winston-Salem / Forsyth County ordinances, rules, and regulations that affect tree conservation
3. Report on CITY-green software: applications, data and availability
4. Review and approval of Committee Charter
5. Negotiation training: basic concepts for creating a negotiation template
6. End-of-meeting information sharing opportunity
7. Agenda for next meeting

Handouts Provided
1. Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Tree Ordinance Committee Charter, Draft 2.0, June 6, 2006
2. Section 3-4, Landscape Ordinance, Adopted 3/7/87 (FWKL) 0/1/91 ©
3. Section 3-5, Bufferyard Standards
I. **Introductions, Agenda Review**

A. The facilitator, Steve Smutko, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the day’s agenda. He suggested postponing the negotiation training and committee charter discussion until after the discussion on city/county ordinances and CITYgreen. It was agreed to change the order of the agenda.

II. **Report on Winston-Salem / Forsyth County ordinances, rules, and regulations that affect tree conservation**

*Fred Holbrook, City-County Inspections Department*

A. Steve Smutko introduced a process to guide discussion of information presented before the committee. After a presentation, the committee discuss information in the following order:
1. Clarification of information presented
2. Your reactions to what you just heard
3. Implications of the information on decisions by the committee
4. Actions to be taken based on information

B. **Buffer Yard and Landscape Ordinances**

1. Fred presented City-County Buffer Yard ordinance using the following outline:
   a. Type of yard and width
   b. Species of tree
   c. When buffer yards are approved
   d. County-wide scope

2. Fred presented the City-County landscape ordinance and covered the following points:
   a. Applies to commercial and institutional land uses, not residential
   b. Regulates who can plant, maintain and remove trees on public property (74-300)
   c. Regulates trees on private property that affect public property, e.g., sidewalk damage
   d. Winston-Salem street tree standards are addressed in this ordinance

3. Reactions:
   a. Planting requirements need to consider scale and activities occurring near trees.
   b. Variety of plantings is important.
   c. Tree species is dependent on planting space and other variables.

4. Implications:
   a. Enforcement of existing ordinance poses some challenges.
   b. Room on a particular lot for tree placement can be tight given the requirements for septic, etc.
   c. When planning for tree conservation and planting, one needs to consider users of the site other than the owner. This includes public utilities, the builder, county health department (for septic location).
   d. The fact that so many of us are here discussing a tree ordinance may provide some incentive for other parties to get involved – specifically the city engineering department.
   e. We need to move beyond existing limitations to do the right thing.
   f. Need to be aware of hurdles and find other ways to deal with them.

5. Actions
   a. Improve enforcement. If enforcement becomes more effective, what is the impact on this issue?
   b. Explore with the County Health Department issues related to septic fields, etc.
   c. Need to develop a listing and description of existing ordinances, regulations, and policies that have a
direct connection to the objectives of this committee.

d. Need to also keep a listing and description of issues that are not directly related, but are nonetheless important to the objectives of this committee.

III. Report on CITY-green software: applications, data and availability

*James Mitchell, Vegetation Management, City of Winston-Salem*

A. James reported that CITYgreen is a product sold by American Forests, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protection and restoration of trees and forests. CITYgreen is a GIS application for land-use planning and policy-making. The software conducts statistical analyses of ecosystem services and creates maps and reports. CITYgreen calculates dollar benefits based on your specific site conditions.

CITYgreen 5 is a Windows-based Geographical Information System (GIS) application. It is an ArcView extension. ArcView is a software product of Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). License for CITYgreen is $895.

American Forests provides training for CITYgreen users at an additional cost. An alternative to purchasing the product, American Forests can be hired to conduct a tree assessment for the city and county as was done in Charlotte.

B. Implications:

1. Need to consider alternatives to CityGreen. Planimetric data may be useful for estimating tree canopy. Planimetric data are typically used for measurement of impervious surface area. Canopy information may be able to be derived from impervious surface data. Planimetric maps may available before the end of the year.

2. What is the importance of measuring tree canopy? Useful for establishing a baseline from which the success of tree conservation policies can be measured. Changes in tree canopy in the last six years should also be measured.

C. Actions

1. James Mitchell will investigate services offered by American Forests to catalog Forsyth County’s tree canopy using CityGreen.

2. James and Lynda Schwan will identify other data that might be useful in this effort.

3. Need to determine the need for this analysis and whether an investment in money and resources will be worth the effort.

4. Can do a low cost study using sampling techniques and intern labor. Regardless of how the study is accomplished, the study results must be valid and reliable.

5. Investigate options of integrating tree cover with stormwater regulations to gain some regulatory relief.

IV. Future meeting Dates

A. The committee selected two future meeting dates:

July 19, 2006 @ 3:30
August 30, 2006 @ 3:30

B. The committee will try to hold meetings on the third Wednesday of each month starting this fall.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.
Next Meeting

July 19, 2006
3:30 – 6:00
City Hall South, 2nd -Floor Conference Rm., Winston Salem, NC

Agenda Items
1. Welcome and agenda review, Steve Smutko
2. Description of stormwater regulations and implications on a tree ordinance, Keith Huff
3. Discussion of tree canopy: it’s significance and data collection alternatives
4. Develop an information plan for the committee: What information the committee will seek, sources of information and schedule.
5. Review and approval of Committee Charter, Steve Smutko
6. Negotiation training: basic concepts for creating a negotiation template, Steve Smutko
7. End-of-meeting information sharing opportunity, All
8. Agenda for next meeting