

## MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE

To provide a forum for discussion of ideas, concepts, and methods to preserve trees and protect the tree canopy,

To make recommendations to County Council to encourage the preservation and replacement of trees which may be lost in the process of residential and commercial real estate development and to propose minimum standards for Council to consider, and

To provide educational and other useful information about historic and significant specimen trees and tree categories and to encourage people to preserve and nurture trees so classified.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Diane Eldridge**  
Conservation Planning Consultant

**Sandra Hamann**  
Greenville Council of Garden Clubs

**C. Doug Harper**  
Commercial Developer

**David Holmes, Chair**  
Attorney

**Kim Kauffman**  
Landscape Architect

**Tom Keith**  
Landscape Architect

**Dan Rawls**  
Greenville County Planning Commission

**Gordon Seay**  
Greenville Association of Realtors

**Coleman Shouse**  
Home Builders Association of Greenville

**Steven Smith**  
Forester

**Todd Ward**  
Furman Company

**Jimmy Forbes**  
Director of Greenville County Planning Commission, non-voting facilitator

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
June 8 8:00 a.m.  
Greenville County Square  
Conference Room B

**FINAL PUBLIC HEARING**  
June 8 6:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
Greenville County Square  
301 University Ridge

# Keeping the GREEN in GREENville

[Click here](#) to complete the public survey and let the Committee know what you think about a tree ordinance

June 5 2006

## Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee Continues its Work

At the ninth regular Committee meeting on May 25, three speakers shared their expertise and perspectives about a possible county tree ordinance.

Jimmy Walters, Urban Forester with the SC Forestry Commission, discussed the importance of taking appropriate measures to protect trees on construction sites, stating that each healthy shade tree that is preserved adds approximately one per cent to the sales price of a home. Because preserved trees are larger, already established, and acclimated to the surrounding environment, they provide more benefits than small, new trees and are likely to survive if proper care is taken to protect their roots during construction. He stated that it is critical to install a fence to keep all construction activities away from the critical root zone—a one foot radius for every inch of trunk diameter at breast height. Mr. Walters also recommended protecting groups of trees on development sites when possible. He further recommended that a trained county staff member be assigned to assist developers in the preparation of a tree plan that identifies all trees targeted for preservation and the methods intended to protect them.

Eston Rodgers, Executive Director of the Home Builders Association of Greenville, expressed concern that any costs associated with protecting trees on residential construction sites would be passed along to the homebuyer and would potentially prohibit many people from being able to afford a new home, adding that a one per cent increase in the sales price nationally would remove 400,000 people from the buying market. He recommended providing incentives such as density bonuses to developers for the protection of trees. He also stated that the burden of protecting trees should not fall only on the commercial and homebuilding industries—it should be shared by all citizens.

Ed Macie, Southern Regional Urban Forestry coordinator for the US Forest Service, referred to the universal loss of trees and its effects as “scary.” He discussed some of the consequences of removing trees, such as increased stormwater runoff and changes in water quality, adding that communities bear the cost of these impacts. He recommended a suitability study to maximize the protection of trees, including site-specific plans that provide flexibility, such as lot line

adjustments to save trees on development sites, and a “big-picture analysis” to identify land important for protection. He described community conservation programs that provide funding to purchase such land as more and more common. Acknowledging that agricultural and forestry practices are generally exempted from tree ordinances, Mr. Macie recommended that once land use changes to any other use, it should be subject to the requirements of the ordinance. He emphasized that it is essential to set minimum basic requirements for trees in all developments and suggested incentives as a reward for those who do more than required. He recommended a minimum canopy requirement, such as 30-40 per cent, instead of numbers of trees. He also stressed the importance of requiring significant tree cover in parking lots to help counter the impacts of large asphalt surfaces on local environments and on stormwater management.

During the public comment period, Elise McCasland of Greer expressed her support for a strong tree ordinance that sets clear and forthright directives.

## ATTEND THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING JUNE 8 AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Approximately 40 people attended the May 25 public hearing at Woodmont High School to share their thoughts about a potential tree ordinance for Greenville County. The majority of those attending were overwhelmingly in favor of a strong ordinance that provides protection for certain existing trees and that sets minimum requirements for planting trees in new developments, with no one stating any objections. A number of the nearly 20 speakers urged the Committee to include protection for historic and other significant trees, while some passionately lamented the loss of large areas of forested land in their neighborhoods. Several expressed frustration that protecting trees has become a political issue while it should simply be a matter of common sense.