

**Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting**  
**Monday, August 22, 2016, 9:00 a.m.**  
**The CBC Lodge Meeting Room, 696 Sky Valley Way**  
**Sky Valley, Georgia**

Commission Members Present: Will Gurley, Helen Kleiber, Dan McAfee, Tommy Tebeau  
Liz Morley off board due to being newly appointed to fill Liz Carr vacancy on City Council – Mrs. Morley's  
P & Z replacement not yet made

Also present: Mayor Hughel Goodgame; Councilor Milner Lively, City Manager Linda Lapeyrouse  
Guests: Mark Wiles and Seth Hawkins - Arborists from GA Forestry Commission

Meeting was called to order by chairman Will Gurley at 9:07

July 18 minutes: correct spelling of Dan McAfee's name.. remove one of the f's.  
Dan McAfee made motion to accept corrected minutes; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tommy Tebeau; minutes approved.

**Agenda Item: Tree Cutting**

Mr. Gurley welcomed the two representatives from the GA Forestry Commission whom Linda L. had invited to attend the meeting, Mark Wiles, Certified Arborist and Seth Hawkins, Community Forester for our area and Certified Arborist. The men stated that they have had time to look over our tree ordinance and proposed changes and do not recommend that trees be topped. There are no trees that are better to top than others. Instead, crown reduction pruning or tree removal is preferred.

Seth stated topping is bad for trees in many ways such as:

- a. draws insects into cut area which infects interior of tree
- b. decreases interception of rainfall which can result in ground erosion
- c. can cause topped area of tree to rot which eventually causes entire tree to die

Pruning is healthy because it thins out crowns

If taller trees are removed, then he encourages replacing them with shorter trees

When asked if tree cutters can be certified? Yes, they can.

A couple of residents stated that their view is the most important thing to them.

When asked if there is any treatment for a tree where a cut has been made? Ans: Yes, but it usually seals in disease such as fungus which will harm the interior of the trunk – they do not recommend. Seth emphasized that the canopy coverage can help determine desired density of trees, anticipated canopy area being determined by type of tree at its maturity, not the present size. The larger the tree, the more space needed for its nutrients.

Linda asked if there are any guidelines we could use within the ordinance to allow for thinning trees, such as recommended distances between certain types of trees to promote healthy growth. They have a chart that they can send.

Audience member Don Rice made reference to Firewise standards which suggest distances between the home and trees be taken into consideration . Mark states those standards are based on Western standards, not our area.

Audience member Steve Mason asked if there is a list of endangered trees in our area? Seth named hemlock and ash as currently endangered.

Linda L. asked if they could provide a list of invasive species that should not be planted and should be allowed to cut. They can provide information on invasive species and “trash” trees that are short lived, messy, insect- or disease-prone and weak.

When told that our current ordinance allows 8” or smaller trees to be cut without a permit, Seth states we don’t want to destroy our new generation of trees, but that most cities don’t regulate trees under 6 inches.

Dan McAfee asked if they know of other communities that are dealing with our same issues? Mark has emailed national arborists across the country through a listserv to ask for suggestions but so far has had no response.

Hughel asked if any cities have their own arborists? Yes, and Seth stated there are arborists that contract with cities on a part-time basis.

Seth also suggested a “National Tree Benefit Calculator” site for determining the value of a healthy tree.

The two Forest Service arborists asked if they could return next month with more information. They also suggested we could send a tree person from our city to their upcoming workshop to help him learn how to better determine when to cut and/or trim. For example, the slope of a lot should be considered. On steeper slopes, heavier canopies are needed to help avoid erosion.

Jackie Bell read questions from a new property owner. She wonders why a permit is required on my own property, and what is the fine if she cuts down trees and doesn’t ask first? Answer: Up to \$1,000 per violation plus replanting requirements.

Steve Mason commented that since this ordinance affects all of the city, he suggested action taken by Council should be done during months when most property owners are here. He also adds, beetle infested pine trees CAN be treated which is cheaper than having them cut down. Chairman Gurley agreed that we would like to be able to finalize any changes to the ordinance before everyone leaves, but we cannot stop our progress if we do not finish before then. Any proposed ordinance can be e-mailed, and public comment can be e-mailed back to us and read at the public hearing.

Joyce Horton stated they have had their house for many years. What do you do if your once clear view is blocked? She also asked what to do about “bag worms.” Steve Messer responded that he asked the Forest Service men and they said that the “bag worms” would not harm the tree, but that they did choose to nest in trees that are diseased or weak.

Another audience member asked if neighbors are taken into consideration when trees are to be cut between properties. Yes, all things are considered.

Don Haney stated that many of our roadways need attention. Trees need cutting that are on right of way.

10:05 Tommy makes motion the meeting be adjourned; Dan 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting is adjourned.

Submitted by  
Helen Kleiber, P & Z Commission Secretary