



TREE COMMISSION

City of Macon
P.O. Box 6598
Macon, GA 31208

COMMISSIONERS

Appointed members

Robert Apsley
Chairman
Historic District

Developer
Vacant

Heather Bowman-
Cutway
Citizen-at-large

Hamp Dowling
Citizen-at-large

Donna English
Secretary
Master Gardener

Professional
Vacant

Citizen-at-large
Vacant

Ex-officio members

Karol Kelly
Bibb County
Extension Office

Dale Dougherty,
Director
Macon-Bibb Parks
and Recreation

Beryl Budd
Georgia Forestry
Commission

Laura Jackson
Keep Macon-Bibb
Beautiful Commission

Rick Shannon
Georgia Power

Ben Hamrick
Macon-Bibb Parks
and Recreation

Randell Hunt
City Forester

James P. Thomas
Planning & Zoning
Commission

January 20, 2012

Honorable Robert Reichert
Mayor, City of Macon
Re: Forest Hill Road Landscaping

Dear Mr. Reichert:

At your request the Tree Commission has reviewed the proposed landscape drawings for the Forest Hill Road Improvement Project, and on December 16, 2011, I met with Mr. Van Ethridge of Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.

The specific language of the Ordinance requires replacement of trees condemned for such road widening projects at a 1 to 1 ratio of caliper inches of trees removed to inches of trees replaced, with 2" caliper minimum size trees. (Sec. 14-32 a.)

In the letter dated March 22, 2011, Mr. Ethridge stated that 3,221 caliper inches of trees (214 trees) are to be replaced with 540 caliper inches of trees (324 trees). Thus, the proposed replanting represents a deficit of 2,681 caliper inches, or less than 17% of the total amount required by the Tree Ordinance. Incidentally, because the minimum tree is required to be 2" caliper if the plan calls for 324 trees the replacement caliper figure should be at least 648 inches, not 540 inches.

In his letter Mr. Ethridge acknowledged: "While this is nowhere near the total calipers removed, the area of right of way available to replant does not exist along the proposed project."

While replanting trees within the Forest Hill Road Corridor would be highly desirable, an alternative method exists for satisfying the Ordinance by replacing the deficit caliper inches in other locations on City owned property, the so-called "tree bank" concept. During our brief meeting Mr. Ethridge refused to consider this possibility.

The proposed landscape plans, designed with citizen input, include trees, shrubs, perennials, irrigation systems and annual color plantings. While such planting embellishments could temporarily be a visual asset to the community, the cost of maintaining this landscape would be much greater than simple tree caliper and canopy replacement. Assuming the City of Macon would be charged with this expensive maintenance such a landscape plan may not be sustainable given the current budgetary climate.

The Tree Commission can recommend acceptance of the proposed plan only when it conforms with the Tree Ordinance. This can be done by increasing the number of trees, increasing the caliper size of trees, or replacing tree credits elsewhere on City property. Please let me know if you have questions.

Robert Apsley, Chairman

Macon Tree Commission