



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2014

Brookhaven City Council Revises Tree Ordinance

Brookhaven, GA - After lengthy debate and a tremendous amount of public input, the Brookhaven City Council adopted a revised tree ordinance designed to preserve the city's tree canopy, protect the wooded character that older trees create in the city and respect the rights of private property owners to manage their trees as they see fit.

Brookhaven staff and city council have been working for more than six months on the proposed ordinance, after determining that the existing ordinance, inherited from DeKalb County, was inadequate for the needs of Brookhaven. Homeowners were allowed to remove up to five trees per year for any reason, with no requirement for replacement, management of increased runoff or other factors. Brookhaven's ordinance is intended to facilitate and promote tree canopy preservation and make tree replacement an integral part of the land development process in the City of Brookhaven.

"We have worked very hard to strike a balance between respecting the rights of property owners to manage their trees and their property as they see fit, and protecting the natural beauty that trees bring to Brookhaven," said City Councilmember Rebecca Chase Williams. "It's taken a long time but I believe we've found that balance."

The new ordinance has been written to protect specimen trees, create standards for preserving trees as development occurs, discourage clear-cutting and mass grading of land during construction that results in the loss of mature trees. If tree loss cannot be prevented, the tree ordinance creates standards for ecologically appropriate replanting or monetary recompense.

Because the ordinance was adopted 3-0, Mayor J. Max Davis, as chair, was not able to vote.

"We have heard a lot of comments from the public about trees and exactly how much control the city should exercise in protecting trees from removal," said Brookhaven Mayor J. Max Davis. "Although I still have concerns that I would like to address regarding infringement on property rights, I believe we've got an ordinance that's much better than the one we inherited from DeKalb County, that's shorter and much easier to understand."

###

Media Contacts:

Mike Hassinger
Office: 404-637-0510
Cell: 770-680-0376

Michael Lee Jr.
Office: 404-637-0508
Cell: 404-205-3832

news@brookhavenga.gov