

Memorandum

To: Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk

From: Advisory Committee on Trees
Charles Jackman, Jennifer Sager, and Robert Trumbule

Date: February 3, 2003

Subject: **City of Greenbelt Policy for Trees and Vegetation (Report #2003-1)**

The Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) has discussed a possible City of Greenbelt policy for Trees and Vegetation that would affect the private property of homeowners and commercial property owners. In particular, the ACT reviewed and discussed the detailed, broad reaching, and draconian policy code for Trees and Vegetation that is in force in the City of Takoma Park.

The ACT members reached a consensus that a very comprehensive and strict code is not presently needed in the City of Greenbelt. Greenbelt citizens generally nurture landscaping in their yards and control, when needed, hazardous trees and other vegetation. A strict code would require much oversight and possibly a whole new City of Greenbelt staff individual or group devoted to the task of maintaining the policies. The new bureaucracy would probably require new funding, as possible fines for infractions would be unlikely to generate sufficient income for the new staff.

ACT members do agree that some enforcement ability is needed to aid the City of Greenbelt when violations of city tree ordinances occur on commercial properties. ACT members support the new initiative within the Prince Georges County Council to provide zoning enforcement authority to the City of Greenbelt. The consensus of ACT members is that Greenbelt's Department of Planning and Community Development staff has a better perspective than County staff on issues that affect City residents regarding violations of approved landscape plans for commercial property.

If the initiative is approved and Greenbelt is given zoning enforcement authority, ACT members are willing to provide support to the City Department of Planning and Community Development staff. If needed, ACT members will provide guidance to City staff in dealing with issues regarding tree damage or removal on commercial property. Such guidance will include advice on the best size and type of trees to replace the affected trees.