

Talk Back to The Crier

TREES

To The Editor:

Dunwoody's proposed secession from DeKalb County has led to some understandably heated debate. Regardless of whether you think cityhood will solve all of Dunwoody's traffic, zoning, development, tax and school woes (it won't), and regardless of the type of independent government Dunwoody pursues - municipality or township, one issue that nearly all residents can likely agree on is that of tree preservation.

Complaints about out-of-control development of apartment complexes, traffic congestion and the recent razing of hundreds of trees by DeKalb County at Brook Run (and developers) could be partly resolved through a strong tree-cutting ordinance. I'm not talking about

the weak legislation currently in effect in our county - otherwise the trees at Brook Run would still be there or certain government employees might be facing stiff fines or even jail. I'm talking about tough mandates such as the Portland, Ore. ordinance which strictly regulates the cutting of any tree greater than 12" in diameter on public and private property.

Indeed, the lush forests and tree-lined streets are what make Dunwoody a breath of fresh air (literally and figuratively) amidst the asphalt jungle of Atlanta's unrestrained growth. Yet, as an example of the travesty that is happening throughout Dunwoody at this moment, witness the land raping that has occurred along Happy Hollow Road just south of Dunwoody Club Drive. Hundreds of tall, old trees have been deliberately torn asunder, leaving barren acreage of dirt, dirt and more

dirt. The dirt will give way to six new houses - no doubt dotted with a few measly saplings here and there. And in this very same neighborhood, in the aftermath of the destruction of some 100,000 trees from the 1998 tornado, the Dunwoody Preservation Trust came to our rescue with a major tree-replanting effort. Now it's time to take their efforts a step further.

I challenge the DPT, the Dunwoody Homeowners' Association, local legislators and citizens to come to the rescue of Dunwoody again, in way that will have a huge, positive impact on our lifestyle and the lives of generations to come.

Even if some of us don't think Dunwoody's secession is optimal, we can all come together to rally around a strong tree preservation law. Besides their aesthetic value, shade trees keep homes 20 percent cooler in summer, reduce air pollution, provide

privacy and serenity, reduce noise and glare, decrease erosion, offer sustenance for wildlife and even contribute to crime reduction in communities with extensive street-tree systems. This is an issue that is virtually free of controversy, except for the few developers who will inevitably insist, in error, that construction costs will rise when trees are not bulldozed prior to site development.

This is Dunwoody's chance to set an example for communities throughout the Southeast. It is a chance for Dunwoody to experience a rebirth while maintaining its desirability as a "piece of country in the city." It is a chance for Dunwoody to set aside petty politics and truly be a shining light for the nation. Whether city or township, let's keep Dunwoody 'green' - before it's too late.

Ellen Fix