

**Report #2017-1**  
**June 4, 2017**

**Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Trees – Report to the City Council**

**Subject: Size of the Advisory Committee on Trees**

A verbal referral to the ACT from the City Council occurred at the Work Session with Advisory Group Chairs, held on February 22, 2017. It was suggested by a Greenbelt resident at a City Council meeting on February 13, 2017, that the Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) be increased in size from its current three members to a larger number of people in order to involve more city residents in matters dealing with trees. ACT Chairperson Charles Jackman received the referral for the ACT group and reported it to the other ACT members at their meeting on March 28, 2017. The ACT group decided that this item should be included as an agenda item for the next scheduled meeting on April 18, 2017. The agenda item titled “Discussion on possibly increasing the size of the Advisory Committee on Trees” was advertised in the Greenbelt News Review.

The ACT considered this suggestion very seriously and discussed at length the pros and cons of such a change in the size of the committee. Attendees at the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting included all the current ACT members (Charles Jackman, Ethel Dutky, Bob Trumbule) as well as Brian Townsend (staff liaison, Certified Professional Horticulturist, Maryland Licensed Tree Expert, and City Arborist), Erin Josephitis (Environmental Coordinator for the City), and Greenbelt resident Bill Phelan (former staff liaison and City Arborist as well as a frequent attendee of ACT meetings). ACT members were surprised that no other Greenbelt residents attended to provide input on this issue.

The size of ACT (three members) was mandated in Resolution Number 908 to establish ACT on March 27, 2000 by the Greenbelt City Council. This resolution established ACT to study, investigate, and advise the Greenbelt City Council on matters related to the City’s tree resources. It was required that at least one of the members of ACT would have professional knowledge and/or an educational background in horticulture, forestry, plant science or a related field.

At the present time, two of the three ACT members have professional degrees related to plants. One member has a Master’s degree in Botany and Plant Pathology and another has a Master’s degree in Entomology and is a Certified Professional Horticulturist. The third member of ACT does not have a professional degree related to plants, however, he had a career as a professional scientist at NASA for over 35 years and has been involved with tree concerns for over 20 years. Of the three current members of ACT, two have been members since the committee’s formation about 17 years ago and the third has been a member for over 10 years.

The staff liaison (Certified Professional Horticulturist, Maryland Licensed Tree Expert, and City Arborist) and the City’s Environmental Coordinator are in attendance at all the meetings as well. Any business conducted and decisions made at ACT meetings rely on the consensus of all ACT members. Thus, any ACT decision regarding tree issues does not occur until that subject is discussed thoroughly at ACT meetings. All ACT meetings are open to the public. Greenbelt residents interested in tree issues are welcome to attend and provide input at any meeting. Although ACT meetings have always been open to the public and have been advertised in the local paper, visitors have rarely attended any ACT meetings over the nearly 17 years of its existence.

**It was decided at the April 18, 2017, ACT Meeting that the current size of ACT (three members) is a reasonable size and there is no reason to increase the number of appointed members of ACT.**