

**Jefferson Heritage Tree Council Bylaws**  
**City of Jefferson, Georgia**  
Revised May 2013

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Article I - Identification

- **Section 1: Name**
- There is hereby created and established a city tree council to be known as the:  
**Jefferson Heritage Tree Council.**
- **Section 2: Establishment and History**

The Jefferson Heritage Tree Council was established in February 2007 as a subcommittee of the Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) under the leadership of Mary Dugan, active member of the Jefferson HPC, and chair of the JHTC committee. Dugan partnered with Barbara Johnson, Harry Bryan, Lesa Campbell, Imogene Kelly and Jimmy Mock as members of the original JHTC, several of whom (Bryan and Johnson) had already made earlier advances in establishing a unified tree stewardship effort. Original member, Barbara Johnson stated, JHTC was a natural extension from the Historic Preservation Commission at the time because JHTC wanted " *to expand the focus beyond historic structures to include the landscapes to which they were tied.*"

JHTC celebrated its first official Arbor Day in February 16, 2007. The event was punctuated by the announcement that the City of Jefferson had been designated as a Tree City USA, its first year being 2007. The effort to secure Tree City USA designation was lead by JHTC Chair, Mary Dugan, in tandem with City Manager, John Ward.

Inaugural programs announced during the 2007 Arbor Day celebration were the Gift Tree Program, whereby residents can purchase trees to be planted on city property in memory or honor of someone, and the Heritage Tree Program, which encourages residents to nominate trees throughout the city that are of significant age and size, are unique as a species, or serve as a landmark of historic importance. It also was proclaimed that JHTC would continue to observe Georgia's Arbor Day every third Friday in February.

- **Section 3: Compliance with Applicable Laws**

The Jefferson Heritage Tree Council (JHTC) shall comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to the Georgia Open Meetings Act and the Georgia Public Records Law by making available meeting notices, agendas and minutes and carrying out its operations and functions. Where publication or posting on a website is required, the Council shall use the City of Jefferson, Georgia website ([www.cityofjeffersonga.org](http://www.cityofjeffersonga.org)).

Article II - Purpose and Mission

- **Section 1: Creation and Establishment**

Purpose: The Jefferson Heritage Tree Council serves to recognize, foster appreciation of, and inspire awareness of urban forestry and the beneficial contribution trees make to the community.

Mission: The Jefferson Heritage Tree Council will endeavor to guide the stewardship, preservation and planting of trees in the City of Jefferson; to promote the benefits of urban forestry; and to encourage protection of mature, significant and historic trees throughout the area. In serving its community the Council will carry out the duties specified in local ordinances so as to protect the public's interest and ensure that community residents realize the important benefits trees provide now and in the future.

### **Article III - Terms of Membership**

- **Section 1: Members**

The tree council shall consist of eleven (11) voting members who shall be appointed by the mayor and city council, eight of which must be citizens and residents of the city.

- **Section 2: Term of Office**

The term of office of the 11 persons appointed by the mayor to the tree council shall be three years. Board Members in good standing may be reappointed for an additional 3 year term.

Board members filling an unexpired term will complete that term and will then be eligible for an additional 3 year reappointment.

- **Section 3: Compensation**

Members of the board shall serve without compensation.

- **Section 4: Duties and Responsibility**

It shall be the responsibility of the tree council to study, investigate, council, develop or update annually, and administer a written plan for the sustainable management of the community forest, including the care, conservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along city streets, and in other public areas. It shall also be the responsibility of the tree council to include in the plan ongoing education to the community about trees and their management. Such plan will be presented annually to the mayor and city council by the tree council and upon their acceptance and approval it shall constitute the official community forest management plan of the city. The tree council, when requested by the mayor and city council, shall consider, investigate, make findings, report and recommend upon any special matter of question coming with the scope of its work.

- **Section 5: Operation**

The tree council shall choose its own officers, establish its own bylaws and rule and regulations, and keep a journal of its proceedings. A majority of the members shall be a quorum for the transaction of business. The tree council shall meet at least quarterly. The tree council shall have a budget for its operation as approved by the mayor and city council, and shall be authorized to accept grants and private donations on behalf of the city to fund its activities.

- **Section 6: Interface with the City Tree Council**

It shall be unlawful for any person to prevent, delay or interfere with the city tree council, or any of its agents, while engaging in and about the planting, cultivating, mulching, pruning, spraying, or removing of any street or park tree as authorized in this article.

- **Section 7: Review by Mayor and City Council**

The mayor and city council shall have the right to review the conduct, acts and decisions of the city tree council. Any person may appeal from any ruling or order of the city tree council to the mayor and city council who may hear the matter and make a final decision.

<p><b>Note:</b> Sections in Articles I and II above are consistent with content published in Sec. 16.3.17, Jefferson Land Use Management Code.</p>
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#### Article IV - Officers and Terms

- **Section 1: Officers**

The officers of the Council are a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Officers shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

- **Section 2: Term of Office**

The term of each office shall be one year.

- **Section 3: Nomination and Election of Officers**

Elections for officers shall be conducted at the meeting of the Council in November of each year. Any Council member interested in running for office shall state publicly at a Council meeting his or her interest and willingness to run for a specific office.

If the office of the Chair is vacated before the expiration of a term, the Vice-Chair shall serve as Chair until the next meeting. The Council shall conduct an election for Chair at the next regular meeting to fill the vacancy. If the Vice-Chair is elected as Chair, there shall be an election for a new Vice-Chair at that meeting. If the office of Vice-Chair is vacated before the expiration of a term, it shall remain vacant until the next regular meeting, at which time an election shall be held. Any Council members nominated at a meeting at which a special election is held shall be candidates for office.

- **Section 4: General Duties and Responsibilities of the Chair**

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council. The Chair, working with the Council staff, shall oversee the preparation and distribution of the agenda for all Council meetings. The Chair shall be accountable to the Council as a whole in setting policy and shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Council. The Chair (and/or his/her designee) shall serve as the liaison to the media and the other departments, agencies and commissions of the City of Jefferson.

- **Section 5: General Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties and responsibilities that may be delegated by the Chair. In the absence or disability of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties as described above, in Section 4 of this article.

- **Section 6: General Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary**

The Secretary will record minutes from each Council meeting or, if absent, assign prior to the meeting a member to fulfill this responsibility. Afterward, meeting minutes should be distributed to JHTC members, the City Manager and Mayor within five-working days from the

Council meeting and posted on the City of Jefferson's website. The Secretary may also perform other internal communications functions as necessary.

- **Section 5: General Duties and Responsibilities of the Treasurer**

The Treasurer will maintain a current record of all funds, profits, expenditures and budgetary items in a format that can be readily understood, updated and distributed. The Treasurer will report current budget status at each JHTC council meeting or assign a member to report on his or her behalf prior to the meeting. The Treasurer will provide ongoing reports and as requested to the Main Street Jefferson manager activities related to the City of Jefferson budget line items for the tree council, for the Tree Establishment Fund and invoices on behalf of the JHTC that are to be processed through Main Street Jefferson.

## **Article V - Meetings**

- **Section 1: Quorum**

At all meetings of the Council, the presence of a majority of membership shall constitute a quorum. The affirmative vote of a majority of the members shall be required for the approval of any matter. Therefore, based on the membership of 11, six (6) members constitute a quorum. Likewise, at least six affirmative votes are required for the approval of any matter. If six are not present, approval may be obtained by a write-in vote from any member not present if written documentation is provided to support the member's position on a decision.

- **Section 2: Public Participation**

The Council shall hold meetings open to the public and encourage the participation of interested persons. Each person wishing to speak on an item before the Council shall be permitted to be heard. Each agenda for meetings shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Council on items of interest to the public that are within the Council's jurisdiction.

- **Section 3: Meeting Minutes**

Minutes shall be taken at every Council meeting and shall be approved by the majority vote of the Council present.

- **Section 4: Records Retention**

The Council shall utilize the Quad Cities/Planning and Development record retention and destruction policy.

- **Section 5: Regular Meetings**

Regular Board meetings shall be held a minimum of 6 times per year, and at least every other month.

Special meetings may be called by the President with a 7 day notice in order to conduct urgent business, and/or may be called at the request of 2 Board members.

### **Section 6: Meeting Attendance**

Board Members are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of regular and specially called Board meetings each year to be considered a Board Member in good standing.

### **Section 7: Notice of Meetings**

Notices and agendas of all regular and special Council meetings shall be sent via email to each Council member.

Meetings will be open to the public with notices placed on the City of Jefferson website.

### **Section 7: Closed Sessions**

The Council is authorized to hold closed (non-public) sessions at regular and special meetings as provided by law.

### **Article VI - Parliamentary Procedures**

- At the discretion of the Chair of the Council or the committee Chair, and except where the Charter or other rules provide to the contrary, meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Article VII - Codes of Ethics**

- In accepting Council membership, members shall maintain the highest standards of professional and personal conduct. They shall support its mission, goals and objectives; instill in the public a sense of confidence about the Councils' conduct and intentions; uphold all laws and regulations; refrain from using their official positions to secure special advantage or benefit for themselves or others.

### **Article VIII - Amendment of Bylaws**

- These bylaws shall be reviewed as necessary and may be amended at any meeting of the Council by a majority vote of the Council, provided such proposed amendments are circulated in writing to all Council members at least ten (10) days prior to such meeting.

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The bylaws presented in this document are a revision of the original bylaws adopted in February, 2007.

This document (Revised May 2013) was revised and presented to JHTC for review. These revised JHTC Bylaws were approved by the Jefferson Heritage Tree Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

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