



THE TREE NEXT DOOR

"An organization of neighbors dedicated to protecting Atlanta's tree canopy"

June 20, 2011

Dear Atlanta City Council Members:

The Tree Next Door's (TTND) most recent study of the Office of Building's Arborist Division's work performance for the 1st quarter of 2011, attached to this email, confirms our study of January & February sent to you in May. **That study indicated that the field arborists are not working to full capacity and one field arborist could do the work required under today's economic downturn.**

This document is simply the most recent of numerous documents that have been published on The Tree Next Door website detailing the lack of productivity that has been going on for the past 15 months (since Jan 2010).

The three Field Arborist's salaries are paid from the Tree Trust Fund. That Fund was created to replant lost trees and educate our citizens of their rights and responsibilities under the Tree Protection Ordinance. When considering the new 2011 Budget, please allow for planting more trees by reducing the Field Arborist staff.

Peter Aman, COO, in an email (see page 2), promised TTND that he would deal with those unproductive arborists. He requested that we provide him with documentation. That information is in our Quarterly study attached.

If the field staff is reduced, it should not be in accordance with the city policy of "last hired, first fired" given that Peter Aman promised he would address the issue of poor productivity if we provided the data showing the performance problems. Given his promise and the data we've provided about each individual's performance, the only arborist that the City can rationally retain at this point is David Tachon, and even then, only if he picks up the work of the other two Field Arborists.

We believe it is important that the City enforce the Tree Protection Ordinance and operate in the most cost effective manner.

Very truly yours,

Shel Schlegman, Chair

www.treenextdoor.org

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Conversation: Arborists RIF
Subject: RE: Arborists RIF

Thank you for your interest in trees and the arborist's efforts. We understand your concern, but with regards to the reduction in force, we have no discretion in how individuals are selected to be eliminated-that is set forth by the City Council in the Code of the city-we must follow this process of selecting individuals-it is city law. ***Certainly if those individuals that remain do not do a satisfactory job they can and will be replaced.***

Thank you,
Peter