



# CITY OF ATLANTA

68 MITCHELL STREET SW, SUITE 3180  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-0312  
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## BOARD OF ETHICS

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## ETHICS OFFICE

Ginny Looney, Ethics Officer

# Ethics Office Investigative Report

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Case Number: CO-06-024  
City Arborist – Falsification of Documents

Claudia Janka  
Investigation Manager  
July 6, 2006



## CITY OF ATLANTA

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ETHICS OFFICE  
Ginny Looney  
City Ethics Officer  
glooney@atlantaga.gov

July 6, 2006

Steven Cover  
Commissioner  
Department of Planning & Community Development  
55 Trinity Avenue, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Commissioner Cover:

In response to your memorandum dated June 16, 2006, the Ethics Office has conducted an investigation into allegations that Stanley Domengeaux, a city arborist, falsified his work logs to boost his productivity numbers. The investigation showed that Mr. Domengeaux made entries into his work log of addresses that did not exist, properties on which no trees grow, and addresses for which no request for service was made.

While there is no evidence that Mr. Domengueaux violated the City's Code of Ethics, it appears he did engage in misconduct that is serious enough to warrant disciplinary action. Attached is a copy of the investigative report prepared by Claudia Janka, the investigation manager for the Ethics and Audit Offices.

The report recommends that the department take appropriate disciplinary action against Mr. Domengeaux based on the facts presented. I would appreciate a report within 30 days on the action that the department takes in this matter.

The report does not make any recommendations about the department's policies and procedures because the changes that the department is making to its data collection system should resolve many of the underlying conflicts and problems related to the Arborist Division.

If you or your staff would like to discuss this report or its recommendations, please let me know.

Sincerely,

  
Ginny Looney

cc: Jackye Fauntleroy  
Ainsley Caldwell (w/o report exhibits)  
Stanley Domengeaux  
Tom Coffin (w/o report exhibits)  
Claudia Janka

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**  
**ETHICS OFFICE CASE CO-06-024**

**Summary**

The Ethics Office's investigation revealed that Stanley Domengeaux falsified documents while working as an arborist. He reported in his field notebook as well as his daily log in File Maker Pro that he conducted tree evaluations that could not have been done because the addresses do not exist or no trees grow on the property. Although there is no evidence that Mr. Domengeaux violated the Code of Ethics, he did engage in serious misconduct for which disciplinary action is warranted. Therefore, it is recommended that the Department of Planning and Community Development take appropriate disciplinary action against Mr. Domengeaux.

**Overview**

**Date:** July 6, 2006

**Case:** CO-06-024

**Employee under investigation:** Stanley Domengeaux, Arborist

**Complainant:** Tom Coffin, Arborist

**Allegation:** Falsification of documents

**Witnesses:** Tom Coffin, Arborist  
Ainsley Caldwell, Arboricultural Manager  
Stanley Domengeaux, Arborist

**Investigator:** Claudia Janka

**Narrative Report**

On 5/26/06 I met with the complainant, Tom Coffin, Arborist. Mr. Coffin came to my office with documents alleging that Stanley Domengeaux was falsifying documents to elevate his productivity.

Mr. Coffin had printed out documents from File Maker Pro that showed addresses where Mr. Domengeaux had allegedly conducted tree evaluations. There was no request for service at these locations. There are four ways to request service for a tree evaluation: in person, email, phone in or coworker. A request for service will have a contact name and phone number and the addresses pulled by Mr. Coffin did not have that information; therefore, there would be no name or address to send the proper permit to.

Mr. Coffin had permission to select ten locations that Mr. Domengeaux had listed in File Maker Pro and go to these locations to verify that they were good addresses. Mr. Coffin had this information documented and checked each location to find that they did not exist. In addition, these locations had no request for service.

On 5/31/06 I contacted Mr. Caldwell who advised me that he had begun his own investigation on Mr. Domengeaux. Mr. Caldwell was going to look at Mr. Domengeaux's field notebook and verify the addresses that he had listed.

On 6/8/06 I contacted Mr. Caldwell who stated that he had asked for Mr. Domengeaux's field notebook and asked Mr. Domengeaux to accompany him to three locations. Mr. Domengeaux told Mr. Caldwell that he did not want to go because some locations may not exist. Mr. Caldwell asked him to elaborate and Mr. Domengeaux refused, only saying that he felt pressured to increase his numbers.

On 6/16/2006, Commissioner Steven R. Cover forwarded the department's findings of discrepancies in Mr. Domengeaux's daily log book, daily reports in the File Maker Pro database, and reported versus actual on-site visits.

On 6/22/06 I met with Mr. Caldwell to ride along with him to verify his findings. The addresses are listed below:

- 2062 Bethel St., NW. does not exist, but there is a Bethel Dr., NW. The numerical sequence is by 8. I saw no 2062 Bethel Dr., NW, and there were no duplexes or apartments that would justify that number according to the City of Atlanta plat map. The address is non-existent, as well as there were no dead trees in the purported area. The minimum required frontage to build a structure is fifty feet. Every plat on Bethel Dr., NW ranges from fifty feet to eighty feet; therefore, a new lot would not meet the requirements. Photos were taken at this location.
- 725 Felker Ward St., NW. The addresses at this location commence at 1937 and end at 2437. Felker Ward is a dead-end street traveling east and stops at Hollywood Rd. traveling west.

- 1235 Margaret Pl., NW. The numerical sequence on Margaret Pl. commences at 941 and end at 1072. Numerical sequences at this location are in increments of six. With a minimum of fifty feet of frontage for each lot, it would be impossible to have a house number of 1235. That would be over sixteen lots in a space that could conceivably have six to eight lots between Margaret Pl., NW and Eugenia Rd.; therefore, this address does not exist.

On 6/28/06 I went to five other locations that Mr. Domengeaux had documented in his field notebook to see if these locations were valid. I visited the following locations:

- 1892 Defoors Ave., NW. I did not locate this address. There are town homes at this location and individual house numbers for each town home. The numbers range from 1600 to 1200 Defoors Ave., NW. I took one photo at this location.
- 2321 Northside Dr., NW. I observed Bobby Jones golf course at this location. The golf course extends for several blocks and there are no houses on the golf course. I took a photo at this location.
- 2582 Habersham Rd., NW. I located 2570, 2586 and 2592. These are single family homes and I found no 2582.
- 213 Blackland Rd., NW. I located 205 and adjacent to that was 225. I took photos at this location. I located no 213.
- 1231 Howell Mill Rd., NW. There is a strip mall on that side of the street with numbers that range from 1181 to 1207. Adjacent to the mall is the City of Atlanta Water treatment facility. This area is secured with barb wire along the fence and locked gates. I observed no trees inside this facility only water, buildings and concrete. This could conceivably be 1231; however, there are no trees to evaluate at this location

On 7/5/06 Mr. Domengeaux came to meet me in my office. I asked Mr. Domengeaux to explain about the non-existing sites that I had visited. Mr. Domengeaux avoided the question and began to tell me how Tom Coffin harasses him and places pressure on the other employees to produce higher numbers. It is my understanding that Mr. Domengeaux and Mr. Coffin have had an ongoing dispute, which may have led to this current complaint. Once again I asked Mr. Domengeaux about his field notebook and the non-existing addresses. Mr. Domengeaux was silent for approximately one minute, and then said, "I did what I did and I will accept the consequences."

### Conclusion

My investigation revealed that Mr. Domengeaux did falsify documents to elevate his productivity. In addition, Mr. Caldwell stated that Mr. Domengeaux's productivity has decreased since the investigation began. Because Mr. Domengeaux's work logs are official city records and his actions in creating false entries appear to be intentional, Mr. Domengeaux has engaged in serious misconduct for which disciplinary action should be imposed. See City Code Sec. 114-528 (20).

I recommend that the Department of Planning and Community Development take appropriate disciplinary action against Mr. Domengeaux based on the facts presented. Among the factors to consider are the severity of the offense, the deliberate nature of his actions, his work performance, and prior disciplinary actions against him, if any.

### Supporting Documents

1. Photos of Defoor Ave. NW, Northside Dr. NW, Blackland Rd. NW, Bethel St. NW, Felker Ward St. NW, Margaret Pl., NW.
2. Memo to Ainsley Caldwell from Tom Coffin.
3. Memo with list of tree evaluations with no request for service.
4. Photographic copies of map locations that Mr. Caldwell and this investigator visited.
5. Memo from Steven Cover to Ginny Looney.
6. Memo from Ainsley Caldwell to Ibrahim Maslamani.
7. Copy of Mr. Domengeaux's field notebook.
8. Copies of Mr. Domengeaux's daily report he logged in File Maker Pro.
9. Copies of daily reports with plat maps attached.

CITY OF ATLANTA



NOTICE OF FINAL ADVERSE ACTION				
EMPLOYEE NAME	EMPLOYEE #	DEPT.	BUREAU	DATE OF ISSUE
Stanley Domengeaux	1884	Planning and Community Development	Buildings	August 4, 2006

Date Proposed Adverse Action Issued: June 20, 2006

Nature of Emergency (where applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Adverse Action:** 3 days suspension without pay      **Effective Date:** August 7,8,9, 2006

Reason(s) Rule(s) Violated: Willful making of false statements to the public, supervisors officials, boards, department heads or agencies or the willful making of false statements on an employment application with the city; and Any other conduct or action of such seriousness that disciplinary action is considered warranted, Sections 114-528 (b)(12) and (20) of the City of Atlanta Civil Service Code. The City of Atlanta's Ethics Office conducted an investigation and concluded in the report that you made entries into your work log of addresses that did not exist, properties on which no tree grow and addresses for which no request for service was made. A copy of the Ethics Office Investigative Report dated July 6, 2006 is attached.

**Date Employee Responded:** July 27, 2006 \_ Did not respond \_ \_

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**Summary of Employee Response**

Oral \_\_\_ Written x None \_\_\_

**Indicate Whether Modified** Yes x No X  
(check one)

**TO EMPLOYEE:**

**YOU MAY APPEAL THIS FINAL ADVERSE ACTION TO THE CITY OF ATLANTA CIVIL SERVICE BOARD BY COMPLETING THE ENCLOSED APPEAL FORM AND SUBMITTING IT TO THE BUREAU OF LABOR RELATIONS WITHIN FIVE (5) DAYS.  
(SECTION 5-3060 LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS ORDINANCE)**

Signature of Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8.4.06

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Receipt \_\_\_\_\_

This signature indicates receipt **only**, not agreement with action taken

Date Mailed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Where applicable, attach receipt)

**THIS NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN TO EMPLOYEE WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS OF EMPLOYEE RESPONSE**