

**City of Ridgeland  
Community Affairs**

Post Office Box 217  
304 Highway 51  
Ridgeland, Mississippi 39158  
601.856.7113  
[www.ridgelandms.org](http://www.ridgelandms.org)



Gene F. McGee  
Mayor

David W. Overby, CPA  
Director of Finance &  
Administration  
City Clerk

Board of Aldermen

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Mayor Pro Tempore

Ken Heard, Ward 1

Chuck Gautier, Ward 2

Kevin Holder, Ward 3

Larry Roberts, Ward 4

Scott Jones, Ward 5

Linda S. Davis, Ward 6



**PRESS RELEASE**

**For more information, contact  
Mayor Gene McGee, 601-856-7113**

**Ridgeland's New Tree Ordinance Effective June 1**

Ridgeland City officials approved a new ordinance designed to preserve trees and the benefits that they provide to the urban environment. Under the new Tree Ordinance, passed on May 2, 2006, existing trees with at least 8 inches diameter at breast height are to be protected from cutting and over time, additional trees are to be established, to achieve a 40% tree canopy cover for the City. A tree removal permit will now be required when a property owner intends to clear protected trees for any purpose other than legitimate forestry activities.

Residential properties are exempt from the requirements of the Tree Ordinance if the parcel is less than one acre and/or if the residential parcel is less than five acres and the owners have filed Homestead Exemption. A small percentage of homes on 5 or more acres exist in the City, and those homeowners will need to adhere to the Tree Ordinance. Although the new tree ordinance applies to property in all zoning districts for commercial, industrial, and residential, very few homeowners will be affected.

Trees enhance the economic, environmental, and aesthetic qualities of the City. Some of the environmental benefits of trees include reduced air and surface temperatures by providing shade and transpiring water, energy use savings, reduced UV radiation, improved air quality by removing pollutants, improved water quality by filtering pollutants and reducing runoff and erosion, and wildlife habitat. Trees provide numerous health benefits, reduce noise levels and provide visual screens, increase property values, improve aesthetics of communities, reduce stormwater management costs, contribute to pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and trails, and attract businesses and tourists.

Alan Hart, Director of Community Development for the City of Ridgeland, responds to the adoption of the Tree Ordinance, "I am comforted by the commitment of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to unanimously approve our Tree Ordinance. This Tree Ordinance will not only be for our benefit, but also for future generations of citizens of the City of Ridgeland. We are now able to provide the opportunity for our citizens to enjoy a 40% tree canopy coverage throughout the City. In addition, this canopy coverage will allow the City of Ridgeland Officials to better manage drainage issues and environmental concerns now and into the future."

On the same day that the Tree Ordinance was adopted, the Board approved an amendment to Ridgeland's Subdivision Ordinance, an addition of a section, Tree Preservation/Mitigation. The Amendment sets minimum tree quantities for new subdivision lots, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. The

Community Development Department will guide developers through the new application process, providing interpretation assistance with the new regulations and providing input to site design to help meet the new regulations.

Alderman Chuck Gautier said about the Tree Ordinance, “I am excited that we were finally able to develop a tool that may help us preserve some of Ridgeland’s natural resources, and to encourage - not punish those developers who make an attempt to maintain some of the existing landscape. The Tree Ordinance helps underline the Mayor and Board’s commitment towards making Ridgeland a very livable community. It dovetails nicely with other initiatives the city has prioritized such as the multi-use trails, or the numerous Parks and Recreation activities. I also believe that it will have other positive attributes not as easy to spot - such as improved storm drainage and improved property values.”

Mayor Gene McGee said, “The passage of the Tree Ordinance is consistent with the City of Ridgeland’s goals to continue to improve the quality of life for our businesses and citizens as well as enhancing the property values, while protecting our environment.”

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