

**Statement and motion regarding downtown Cedar Tree
-Made at Council Meeting on 8-14-06**

-Chris Smithson, Southern Pines native, resident, and Councilmember

Southern Pines is a town named after trees.

Southern Pines has for many years been a Tree City USA

Southern Pines has recently heard a lot of debate over whether or not a large, old cedar tree is a significant contributing feature to our town.

Some say the tree is significant because it is old and not a native specimen.
Some say the not is not significant because it is NOT a native specimen.

I don't know who is right. I do know we have plenty of residents who are older and not native to here. I know they contribute to the special character of our town.

Does the tree contribute too?

Is its preservation just as important as the preservation of a historic structure?

Is it a landmark?

Should it be saved?

Some of these questions can be answered by each person here from their heads or their hearts. One of them, however, -the question of Landmark status- has a legal meaning and can be settled through a legal process.

I believe the many questions and arguments people have raised regarding the significance of the Cedar tree on Broad Street the La Terrace property need to be addressed. I believe the Historic District Commission and the Council need to hold public hearings to evaluate and decide whether or not the tree is a Southern Pines landmark.

Application of a Landmark status involves feedback from the State, a public hearing and subsequent recommendation by the Historic District Commission, and a public hearing and final vote by the Town Council. While neither Landmark status nor any other legislative measure I believe this community can make will guarantee the ultimate preservation of this tree, it should certainly be a reflection of the importance the community places on non-architectural contributing features in our Historic District.

Therefore I put forth the motion that the Council direct the Historic District Commission to as soon as possible call and hold a public hearing to evaluate the Cedar Deodora on Broad Street at the La Terrace property in the context of applying Landmark status to it.