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Via Facsimile: 404-875-3242

Mr. Pete Pellegrini  
PATH Foundation

Dear Pete:

As we discussed on Wednesday, I was very disappointed that one of the trees that I planted in the MARTA field was moved on Wednesday morning. When we spoke on site earlier this year, you promised me that neither of the two trees that I pointed out to you in that field would be moved. I wish that I had confirmed our discussion in writing. I don't believe that your oversight was intentional, but it was upsetting nonetheless.

Why was I so upset about the transplant? The tree that was moved Wednesday was a tree that I had rooted from a cutting off of an old cottonwood that was then slated to be (and was eventually) destroyed when the Dakota Townhomes were built in Midtown. It was a beautiful tree. Of the three cuttings that I was able to root, the tree in the field was the only one that survived, so it is the only "legacy" of the original tree other than seedlings that may have managed to grow to maturity in Midtown. The tree was planted in '98 or '99 by Scott Fowler (then around five years old,) and me and was so small (about eight inches) that we put a chicken wire fence around it. The Fowlers and I hauled water out to that tree for three summers to be sure that it was well established.

The tree was flagged with a blue marker by PATH that I found Wednesday that said, "move trash tree." This "trash tree" had a history Pete. Cottonwoods are native trees, and this one had some meaning to me, as well as to the young boy who helped me plant it and care for it. It was obviously being taken care of by somebody, in that it was mulched and placed so that it clearly had not just sprouted up there on its own. When the tree was planted, the field was pretty

barren and the tree was chosen for the site for being drought tolerant enough to make it in the particularly dry field.

The tree is easily 15 feet tall now and was moved at a horrible time, just as it was leafing out. What makes the move all the more confusing, is the fact that it had to be moved at all. According to Wayne, the on-site landscaper with whom I spoke Wednesday, the cottonwood was moved about 10 feet to the east of it's original location so that an oak tree could be planted inches from the original spot. Why wasn't the new oak tree just planted in the location that the cottonwood was moved to? There is just no apparent justification as to why this 15 foot tall established tree had to be moved and endangered.

So why was it replanted by Scott and I again on Wednesday? I'm sure you can appreciate, Pete, the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment of looking at a tree that you planted when it was less than a foot tall grow into a large tree. I wanted to continue to look at that tree as one that I planted, and wanted Scott be able to feel the same way, even if we had to replant it again when it was 15 feet tall.

I think that Wayne tried as best he could to keep a good root system intact with the tree when he moved it, but what was left of the system was about three feet wide at most. Fortunately, cottonwoods are resilient trees and I am hopeful that the tree will survive. Perhaps it is this characteristic and the fact that the cottonwoods grow so quickly that lead some folks to believe that they are "trash" trees. However, I have a hard time believing that anyone that stands under a full grown cottonwood during a good breeze, and listens to the leaves flapping in the wind and making a sound like water rushing, could feel anything but positive thoughts about them.

Again, cottonwoods are native trees, just like certain oaks. There are not a lot of cottonwoods left in the city anymore of significant size. There is the historic cottonwood on W. Peachtree south of 10th, but it is now in decline.

Please leave the tree in question and the other one that we discussed (a male specimen ["Siouxland,") that I had mailed to me from Tennessee that is known for its hardiness, alone, even if your landscape architect or you do not like the new location of the one that Scott and I replanted Wednesday, a site that Wayne was satisfied with. These trees were there long before the PATH Foundation was, and they deserve to stay there. Please confirm in writing that the trees will remain

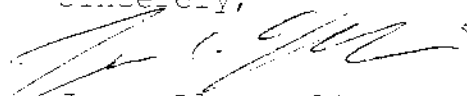
where they are now. If this request somehow poses a problem for PATH, I expect to be contacted before either of the trees are touched and given the opportunity to argue against any plans to move them.

To close, what I was trying to convey to you on Wednesday after your qualified apology was the sense that the PATH Foundation seems to feel that it can come into a neighborhood and do what it wants in order to obtain it's goals, without taking into account what may be important to the people that actually live there. I think that PATH justifies it's actions with its belief that it is doing a good thing in building its paths. In reality, however, PATH also has a tendency to leave a lot of bad feelings behind, such as when about ten large maple trees on N. Clarendon were just thrown to the side of the road a few years back when the path was constructed on the east side of that road. Other examples include, but are not limited to, the block wall and flooding at the Fowlers, the cutting down of eleven medium-sized trees on Old Rockbridge on a Friday after assurances were given by Ed McBrayer that no trees would be cut prior to a scheduled meeting the following Tuesday, the lack of any landscaping along the path between Old Rockbridge and Rockbridge, the lack of general maintenance around that portion of the path (litter abounds and months would go by between mowings the first few years after its construction), the complete lack of any sense of responsibility for the fact that this portion of the path has become a haven for crack smokers, and the construction of that portion about 20 feet east of where I was told it was to be located.

Another problem that I foresee in the future involves the two very large oak trees that had a significant portion of their root system destroyed when the path was constructed west of Laredo along the railroad tracks. I can't believe what PATH did to those trees and will be amazed if they survive.

In conclusion, I look forward to hearing from you and to getting confirmation in writing that the trees in question will now be left in place. Wayne has told me that the tree that was moved Wednesday will be cared for with the other recently planted trees.

Sincerely,



James Alec Gelin

cc: Karla Brenner, 404-463-4559