

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Trees: modest cost — big benefits

As people gather for tomorrow's Fourth of July Parade, they will find 20 newly planted trees on High Street and nearby Pottstown thoroughfares.

Last January, Pottstown Council agreed to an offer from my wife and me to remove dead street trees and stumps and replace them at no cost to the borough. (Two council members voted no.)



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

We are the inheritors of Trees Inc., a non-profit corporation established by Pottstown civic leaders in 1984 to plant and maintain street trees in the borough.

Trees Inc. raised about \$470,000 between 1984 and 1988, which was used to plant 1,500 street trees in Pottstown.

Over the next 20 years, the group planted 400 more new trees and 777 replacement trees.

By 2000, Trees Inc. was devoting its resources to maintenance. During a 7-year period from 2000 to 2007, the borough contributed about \$21,000 annually to trim street trees.

But in 2008, Borough Council stopped its contributions. It subsequently abolished the Shade Tree Commission and adopted a new ordinance making it practically impossible to plant — even replace — street trees downtown.

This was why we needed spe-

cial votes of Council in the last two years to remove and replace dead trees.

Nothing has done more to enhance Pottstown's environment and quality of life than its street trees, yet their total cost over the last 33 years — including tree trimming and sidewalk repairs — has been just \$1.2 million. Less than a quarter of that has been local taxpayer dollars — the rest has been donations and grants.

The borough spends \$1 million annually for parks, but nothing for the street trees people see every day.

### Pottstown Tree Fund over 34 years

New trees planted	1,911
Replacement trees planted	777
Dead trees, stumps removed	706
Stumps only removed	321
Trees trimmed	10,913
Sidewalks repaired	431
Ash trees treated for EAB (2x)	137
<b>Costs:</b>	
Tree planting	\$572,479
Removing dead trees, stumps	\$89,857
Tree trimming	\$328,508
Sidewalk repairs	\$113,385
Private park maintenance	\$81,913
Emerald ash borer treatment	\$35,617
<b>Total cost over 34 years</b>	<b>\$1,223,477</b>
Percent borough funded	22%



**READY FOR 4TH OF JULY PARADE** — None of the trees shown above on High Street, just west of Hanover Street, existed 35 years ago. Most of the 409 trees on High Street were planted in the late 1980s.