

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Trees: modest cost — big benefits

Today is the day Pottstown's street trees are most appreciated, as people seek shady spots on High Street to watch the Fourth of July Parade.

More than two-thirds of Pottstown's 3,000 street have been planted by Trees Inc., a non-profit corporation established by Pottstown civic leaders in 1984 to plant and maintain street trees in the borough.



Commentary by
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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 non-profit planted 400 more new trees and 793 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.

That's why special votes of Council have been needed in each of the last three years to remove and replace dead trees. Sixteen dead trees were removed and replaced this year.

Nothing has done more to enhance Pottstown's environment and quality of life than its street

trees, yet their total cost over the last 35 years — including tree trimming and sidewalk repairs — has been just \$1.2 million. Less than a quarter of that has been provided by borough government — the rest of the funds have been raised through donations and grants.

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

At present, Pottstown has about 70 dead street trees and 350 stumps and empty tree pits where trees once grew. It would be nice to replace them.

It could all be done — and tree damaged sidewalks fixed — for about \$100,000 per year.

Pottstown Tree Fund over 35 years

New trees planted	1,911
Replacement trees planted	793
Dead trees, stumps removed	712
Stumps only removed	307
Trees trimmed	10,929
Sidewalks repaired	431
Ash trees treated for EAB (2x)	137
Costs:	
Tree planting	\$579,979
Removing dead trees, stumps	\$89,847
Tree trimming	\$330,128
Sidewalk repairs	\$113,385
Tree Park maintenance	\$87,320
Emerald ash borer treatment	\$33,886
Total cost over 35 years	\$1,243,995
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.