

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Trees Inc. 2020 report

On Tuesday, we reported on 55 dead street trees removed, 16 new trees planted, and 131 trees treated to save them from emerald ash borer.

More than two-thirds of Pottstown's 3,000 street trees 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
Tom Hylton

Trees Inc. raised about \$470,000 between 1984 and 1988, which was used to

plant 1,500 street trees.

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 eliminated 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 four 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 36 years — including tree trimming and sidewalk repairs —

has been just \$1.3 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 no tax dollars for the street trees people see daily.

The borough's shade tree ordinance makes adjacent property owners responsible for street tree maintenance. That rarely happens.

So Trees Inc. does the best it can. The chart below sums up most of Trees Inc.'s activities.

We all want to protect the planet. Trees Inc. is starting in our own neighborhoods.

Pottstown Trees Inc. over 36 years	
New trees planted	1,914
Replacement trees planted	806
Dead trees removed	768
Stumps only removed	308
Trees trimmed	10,932
Sidewalks repaired	373
Ash trees treated for EAB (3x)	131
Costs:	
Tree planting	\$584,062
Removing dead trees, stumps	\$125,557
Tree trimming	\$330,128
Sidewalk repairs	\$113,385
Tree Park maintenance	\$87,320
Emerald ash borer treatment	\$55,297
Total cost over 36 years	\$1,296,199
Percent borough funded	22%



DOWNTOWN HIGH STREET — None of the trees shown above on High Street, just west of Hanover Street, existed 40 years ago. Most of the 415 trees on High Street were planted in the late 1980s.