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Trees

BY JOYCE KILMER

I think that I shall never see
a poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose lovely mouth is prest
against the Earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
and lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
a nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
but only God can make a tree.

I have reviewed some of the tree code and I would like to add some thoughts from a neighborhood which has been denuded of canopy trees by our Village.

Here is my response to what I know about the proposed new Tree Code.

1. Not planting on the Right of Way in the Village

I think the person suggesting we not plant trees on the right of way is foolish. Likely that person lives on a property big enough to have one or more canopy trees. The rights of way are sometimes the only place a large tree can be planted. Are you suggesting that there should be no canopy trees in smaller lot neighborhoods? Thank you! You should be aware of the financial and natural benefit of canopy trees to the environment. They provide natural shade, reduce watering bills for lawns and other plantings, clean the air, provide oxygen, provide

shelter and food for wildlife, prevent soil erosion, screen unsightly transformer boxes, cable boxes and whatever else public utilities decide to hang on our already over burdened fat wires and provide screening from things we might not enjoy seeing in a neighbor's yard. There are many neighborhoods in Scarsdale with overhead wires and canopy trees next to them. The cost benefit analysis simply does not justify the destruction of canopy trees all over Scarsdale. Nor does it justify the ban on planting them in the rights of way in small lot zoned neighborhoods which have as much right to have them as likely all of the decision makers do in their large lots or comparative mansions. Bramlee Heights had many canopy trees planted decades ago. Some of these trees were planted by young people. They were desired by the neighborhood. There was less air conditioning and the need for natural shade for the homes was great. The trees were here. They are now all gone! And none were replaced by anything like them.

2. Not letting private homeowners remove trees on their property.

As much as I do not like neighbors removing trees, it sometimes has to be done. Even my neighbor who removed the oaks had the right after fearing their demise. But there should be a requirement that the neighbors replace the loss and/or the Village should be required to plant trees in their place on right of ways. Something should be done. Just taking the trees down is bad environmental policy. There needs to be a replace rule. New trees can hold up. Taking down older or diseased trees is ok. Sometimes a homeowner may want to take down a tree that is too large and may present a safety hazard. The Village should also permit this but another large tree should replace it (maybe not as large but not a shrub tree). The current requirement by the Village i.e. to get a tree cutting permit for safety reasons is not sufficient. The Village needs to require replacement.

3. Developers responsibility to our town/village and the environment.

No town, not even Arbor Tree Award winning Scarsdale, should allow developers to build anything here without contributing to an established tree fund and being mandated to plant canopy trees whenever possible. The money the developers make on building here justifies their duty to replace what they destroy and cause in soil erosion by their lack of proper plantings. Just how many cheap arborvitae can you plant before it just starts to look stupid. There are other tree species in the world! Further, the overuse of one type of tree or shrub is a very bad idea. If the species becomes diseased the loss is tremendous.

4. Do not wait to have homeowners request trees be planted on the right of ways. The Village can have a rule which requires that trees taken down on Village right of ways be replaced sua sponte with no input from the adjacent homeowner. Furthermore, the Village can enact rules requiring trees be planted on the right of ways in all of Scarsdale. Currently, the streets look terrible with no trees along the homes. The fat electrical and cable wires with the huge mysterious black boxes and cylinders need to be hidden by foliage. This should be done all over Scarsdale. Unfortunately, people who live here mostly do not stay and do not care. It is the Village's job to care about the long term appearance of the Village. The trees that are removed need to be replaced and the current locations which do not have any tree lined streets should have them planted. They do not have to be canopy trees (though the canopy trees provide the best environmental impact to the earth) but trees should be there. This should be done for environmental reasons including provision of shade, prevention of soil erosion, filtering the air and providing oxygen and screening. There is no reason not to do this. The most recent reports about Westchester Air quality gave it an "F". See Westchester Journal News 4/22/2018. This is mostly due to particulate pollution. Planting trees would help filter our filthy air. A law banning open fires and building wood burning fireplaces/stoves in new homes would also help. Currently and shockingly Scarsdale does not have a law preventing open fires. Bonfires should be illegal.

5. Overhead wires

There are very few areas in Scarsdale which have eliminated trees because of wires. Proper care and planting/pruning of the right types of trees allows nature to live harmoniously with overhead wires. It is simply unacceptable to cut down all the trees to protect wires. It is not done all over the country. That is something any observant person can see.

6. Tree specialist

There should be someone or guidelines about the right types of trees to plant. For example there are trees which are considered invasive. These should not be planted. There are trees which grow shallow root systems which causes them to easily topple. They need to be planted in safe locations. There are trees which will destroy plumbing systems. i.e. high water table trees like Weeping Willows. They should not be planted near the Village sewer and water pipes. Guidelines about tree types would be helpful.

Please study what you have done to me and my neighbors in Bramlee Heights by removing the many canopy trees we had and replacing them with essentially nothing. My watering bills have increased substantially since the loss of so many canopy trees here. Unfortunately, this benefits the Village by providing it with more money. There may be a conflict of interest in the decision making about removal of trees and collection of watering fees. My air conditioning bill has also increased substantially because I no longer have trees to shade my home from the strong western sunlight. My front door gets so hot in summer the things I hang on it melt. This never happened to me until two large Oak trees were removed on a weekend by a developer. I now have to plant my own canopy trees to shield my home from the harsh sunlight. This financial cost should have been borne by the developer who caused the trees to be removed. The Village did nothing about this. It is another tax I have to pay. Meanwhile the developer pocketed his money and the homeowner who insisted the Oak trees be removed at the developer's cost paid nothing to have it done. But I have to bear the cost of the loss.

Please correct the errors you have made to me and to the neighborhood. Also, please consider what smaller lot homes have to deal with. I do not believe people on this board really understand or care how some of us live. Mostly because there is no contact with us. This is your contact. See what you can do.

I hope to see some intelligent decision making on the tree code and on the devastation you have caused this neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Margaret C. Trimarchi
Brown Road