

Morristown To Rescue Its Trees

By Henry M. Holden

Morristown has a plan to rescue some trees by improving the health of existing trees, remove dead ones and replant new, sustainable species in Morristown's Business District.

According to arborists,

street trees planted in an urban environment face a great deal of stress and abuse. The Morristown Shade Tree Commission (MSTC) said, "In Morristown, negative factors are affecting our street trees and causing them to die. The underlying causes and co-

ntributing factors are age, environmental stress, the introduction of chemicals, and improper tree species choice, i.e. wrong tree species, in the wrong place."

The goal of the MSTC is to ensure the proper management of the Morristown community forest. It has

responsibility for the regulation, planting and care of shade and ornamental trees and shrubbery found in Morristown on public property.

"A shady street, clean air and beautiful sites for pedestrians to walk along, are of the utmost importance to a thriving business district," said the MSTC, in a statement to business owners.

A Tree Rejuvenation Plan developed by the town will improve the health of existing trees on South Street, Speedwell Avenue, Morris Street and Elm Street.

The plan includes rescuing certain trees by providing tree wells that promote the passage of air, water, and vital nutrients through the tree's root system, while providing an esthetic,

low-maintenance, walkable and wheelchair accessible surface.

The dead tree removal began in late October on South Street. New plantings and minor widening of tree wells will follow in the spring. All improvements are weather dependent; and improvements will be completed on South Street in the Spring 2017.

The MSTC plans a methodical approach to this tree rescue over the next two years.

It plans to give trees more breathing/growing space, by removing dead or dying trees, and widen all tree wells to 4x6 or 4x8 wherever possible.

Amend all tree wells. Empty wells will be gutted and replaced with new soil. The soil will include the

specifications that Richard Wolowicz, Morristown's Arborist, prepares with the appropriate amount of organic material and food.

All wells will receive a treatment of BioChar, a soil enhancer that holds carbon and makes soil more fertile.

New trees will be planted with species chosen that will be specific to streetscape living.

Tree wells will then be covered with a water permeable aggregate and surrounded with fencing as per DOT specifications to prevent compaction of soil, which suffocates the tree.

Completion dates for streets affected are: South Street: Spring 2017; Speedwell Avenue: Fall 2017; Morris Street: Spring 2018, and Elm Street: Fall 2018.

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