TREE CARE INFORMATION

You may have noticed the major tree pruning that took place this summer.

Taking care of our trees, shrubs and flower beds has always been a priority for the Condo board and owners, with the goal of maintaining our natural environment and property values. Many people choose to live here in part because of the beautiful trees and property grounds. Currently, there are over 200 trees on the property, requiring the efforts of many volunteers to maintain each tree and taking into consideration the impact to our structures, like siding and roofs, ensuring they are not damaged and there is no danger to our residents.

For the last 5 years Catherine Pink has been the lead person overseeing the tree and grounds improvements and maintenance, collaborating with the board members and contractors. She has a great love for trees and an understanding of urban canopy issues, she obtained her experience with trees volunteering at the Arboretum at the Central Experimental farm for 8 years.

In the last five years, our ongoing plan has been to assess the health of all trees, continue with the removals and trimming where needed; and to ensure each tree removal took into consideration a replacement. Over this period five certified arborists from various companies have provided professional advice with regards to our trees and in particular, the maple trees which have been systematically dying. The overall consensus of the arborists has been that these 40-year-old maple trees are dying due to the small green spaces on which they reside combined with the pollution from the winter road salt. Many of the maple trees have girdled roots which can choke the tree off from water and nutrients, eventually killing it. There is no simple way to save them.

Approximately five years ago 7 maple trees were identified as dying, at the recommendation of the arborists the trees were removed and we are pleased to announce we have successfully planted replacements of various tree species that excel in these small spaces and are able tolerate urban pollution. Most of the tree issues stem from the trees planted by the original developer of the property, with very few exceptions most of trees were Norway maple and Gleditsia (honey locusts). While the honey locusts do very well in a crowded and polluted urban environment and ours are doing quite well; but with the removal of so many maples, it left the property looking bare for a the last few years. This is no longer a problem now that most replacements consist of a variety of tree species, are all thriving and growing. Plans are underway to plant a selection of new, smaller tree species that do well in the environment we live in.

When a tree that appears to be ailing is identified, we will observe and wait several years to make sure it is in fact dying and not just having a bad year. If the tree continues to die and there is no chance of survival, it’s remove for aesthetic and safety reasons. The decision to remove a tree is not quick one and we try to keep the tree as long as safely possible. However, not removing the tree can also be dangerous. This summer, in consultation with arborists, it was thought that a maple considered dead in the middle could last another two years before having to be removed, unfortunately, that tree broke in half and fell in a major wind storm this summer. It was very fortunate that no one was injured and the damage to the property was minor. The tree, however, providing shade to several properties, damaged siding and required immediate removal at a higher cost had it been removed with the earlier planned tree removals.

At this time, there are 5 maples that have been identified as ailing and we hope to get another 5 years out of most of them. You can play a part in keeping our tree canopy healthy by observing the trees near your unit and making note of any problems in the **Spring Inspection Form** sent out each spring.

The board is happy to answer any questions you may have about the trees and grounds.

Catherine Pink (Board of Directors for CCC288)