

To: Skip Scirocco, Commissioner of Public Works
From: Tom Denny, Chair, Sustainable Saratoga's Urban Forestry Project
Date: May 30, 2015
Re: Gift of trees from Sustainable Saratoga to the City

Sustainable Saratoga has funding to plant some Centennial Trees. We would like some of the Centennial Trees that we fund to be planted in prominent locations within the city's right of way. We assume this would need to be approved by the City as a gift. We will also fund some plantings on private or institutional properties (Saratoga Springs Housing Authority, among others).

The Urban Forest Master Plan acknowledged that the city did not have the resources to plant all the trees that the city would want to plant. The Plan estimated that the City lost roughly 500 trees per year and was only replacing about 100. To fill this gap, the Plan recommended that the city seek additional private resources. Donations from Sustainable Saratoga to the city are specifically called for in the UFMP Action Strategy 4, especially point G. (The link above goes to the Executive Summary. In the full UFMP, the relevant text is on pp. 31-32. On those pages, there are also two sidebar discussions of how to accomplish more for the urban forest without increasing City budget: "Public-Private Partnerships" and "Good tree policy does not always require City budget outlays.")

We expect that Sustainable Saratoga's tree donations will be an ongoing program for years to come. It is difficult at the moment to estimate exactly how many trees or the dollar amount that we will donate during 2015. It may well be in excess of \$4000 which will pay the purchase cost of more than 20 trees. It probably makes sense for City Council to adopt a resolution that has flexibility about the exact size of this year's gift.

The trees could be planted by volunteers or by DPW employees, or by contractors that Sustainable Saratoga might hire. We can discuss details and questions at your convenience. In general, we would hope that we can find a routine procedure for our ongoing tree donations that involved these steps: (1) securing DPW approval of planting locations, (2) agreement about planting dates, and (3) addressing the City's requirements about insurance and liability if volunteers are to be used. From our experience, we feel that the procedures we have used for the last few Tree Toga volunteer planting days have worked well and can form the basis for future plantings that are funded by Sustainable Saratoga gifts. Please let us know if you have other ideas.

We would like to have this approved soon in case we see an opportunity to plant a few trees in the next couple of weeks as part of the launch and first wave of plantings of Centennial Trees. Most of this year's trees are likely to be planted in the fall.

Thanks as always for your support for our efforts.

Best,
Tom