



Carolyn Stern

Oct 4, 1987 was a day that changed the streetscape in Philmont. Fall colors were peaking when a sudden freak snow storm dropped around a foot of heavy wet snow onto leaf-laden trees. The sound of trees cracking and tumbling was everywhere. Streets were impassable, and we lost many beautiful tall trees along Main Street. After that, instead of the stately old maples, we could see only the overhead wires, the blacktop, the concrete. In 2003, one of the recommendations in the Philmont Comprehensive Plan was to plant new trees on Main Street. As a member of the Main Street Committee, I coordinated the tree planting project.

After learning from the village that we would need to contact the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), I contacted Bill Peckham and learned there was a state tree planting program available for help in revitalizing main streets in NY state. Bill provided us with a list of varieties, taking into consideration aesthetics, overhead wiring, traffic visibility, salt tolerance, hardiness, and moisture requirements. Varieties planted included red maple, seedless ash, honey locust, scholar tree, flowering pear, serviceberry, and kousa dogwood.

Most of the trees were planted on private property, so permission had to be obtained from property owners. In July 2004, I had help on this task from fellow Main Street Committee members, Joan Simard, Barbara Sagal, and Eileen Ordu, along with the efforts and cooperation of Philmont residents and businesses. Permission was obtained, a map was created of tree planting sites, and the trees, which were 2 ½" in diameter, were finally planted in 2005 by the State Landscapers.

Thanks to this special program of the NY State DOT we were able to plant beautiful trees at no cost to the village!

The NYS DOT wrote a letter on October 21, 2005 thanking the Village Board and the Main Street Committee. In it, Bill stated, “although the wheels of State government grind slowly, we are happy that we were able to provide the Village, in the Fall of 2005, with 38 new street trees along State Highway 217. Philmont joins Hyde Park and New Paltz in the first year of this program’s inception... Thanks again for your support.”

Bill Peckham, Tom Brodhead, and the DaCosta Landscaping Crew were a pleasure to work with. These fine quality trees are a daily gift to our village to treasure and they have greatly improved the streetscape of our village.

It’s a wonderful feeling to see these trees again and again each spring bud out with spring green and flowers. The street is more lively and welcoming. I hope others will be inspired to consider planting a tree in their yard, so we can continue to improve our village streetscape.

By Carolyn Pine Stern

