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Southampton Shade Tree Commission
c/o Mr. Doug Melegari
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On September 27, 2015, I inspected the trees along the business district in Vincentown, Southampton Township. I inspected all the trees between the sidewalk and curb on both sides of the street stopping where the sidewalk ends, from about house #37 to #177.

Hazard trees: Three trees are hazards near 147 and at 188 Main Street and First Baptist Church.

At the corner of Church and Main Streets, in front of the First Baptist Church, is an 8" diameter at breast height (DBH) red maple that is rotted and cankered. It is likely to fall on to the sidewalk in the near future. The tree should be removed at the next available opportunity.

Near 147 Main Street is a 20" DBH silver maple with a large branch extending over the roadway that appears to have been hit by a passing truck causing severe damage to the branch. This branch had yellow caution tape around it at the time of the inspection either as a marker to remove that branch or as a warning to other trucks of the low branch. The branch should be removed to the trunk as soon as practical and dead branches larger than 2 inches in diameter should be pruned.

In front of 188 Main Street is a 20" DBH red maple that has an open crack down the center of the trunk. This tree is likely to split in two in the near future and should be removed at the next available opportunity.

The sidewalk cutouts for trees are much too small for tree growth and encourage sidewalk heaving.

Many of the sidewalk cutouts measure 3 feet x 3 feet or 3 feet x 4 feet. This is an extremely small area to try to establish trees of any stature and gives little room for roots before they encounter sidewalks, causing uplifting. In most instances, there are partial squares (flags) of concrete that were installed just to get a square configuration for the cut out. Planting areas do not have to be square. If you think about the lawn extension between the sidewalk and curb, it is one long rectangle that the roots can grow parallel to the sidewalk. Removing these partial flags would be an easy place to start expanding the planting space in the cutouts. The existing cutouts can be further enlarged by removing one flag to each side of the existing cutout. This would give you a 3 feet x 6 feet or 3 feet x 9 feet dimension that is much better at establishing and maintaining trees in small spaces. Some areas have brick pavers for the sidewalk, which can be easily widened by removing some rows of bricks.

Some trees along Main Street are planted in lawn strips that are less than 3 feet wide. While I do not recommend removal of these trees at this time, no trees should be planted in a lawn area or sidewalk cut out less than three feet wide. Remember that sidewalk cut outs should be at least 6 feet in one dimension and three feet in the other (larger if both dimensions if possible).

You should also investigate installing root barriers only on the sidewalk side of the planting cut out (roots rarely lift curbing). The root barriers should run continuously for 3 feet in each direction from the newly planted tree trunk. The minimum depth of the root barrier should be eighteen inches. There are several choices of commercially available root barriers that are convenient to handle but rather costly. One can attain the same root blocking result by using aluminum flashing that is 18 inches wide. This is available at home stores for a modest cost for a roll of 150 or 100 feet.

Sidewalk Heaved at 166, 74 and across the street from 37 Main Street.

Replacement of sidewalk sections (flags) that are concrete usually damage tree roots when forming the area for a new pour of concrete. Cutting tree roots can lead to instability due to loss of holding power of the roots and the cuts can become infected with root rotting fungi that could also lead to instability. Cutting roots should be avoided. There are a couple of ways this can be accomplished. The concrete can be curved around the trunk to allow more room for the buttress roots. The sidewalk can be narrowed near the trunk. Paver stones or brick can be used to bridge over the roots without presenting a tripping hazard. A good example of this is at 57 Main Street.

Use of root control barriers when planting new trees can also prevent future sidewalk heaving. Prevention is more cost effective and less stressful for both the trees and homeowners.

Ash Trees and Emerald Ash Borer remove trees at 147 and 159 Main Street

There are five ash trees along Main Street. Eventually these and all ash trees in Southampton will be attacked by emerald ash borer (EAB). This imported pest has been working eastward from Michigan where it was discovered in 2002. It has decimated ash tree populations throughout its expanding range. Pesticide treatment can protect ash trees but the pesticides must be applied regularly (annually or biannually depending on material and method of application). There is no foreseeable end point to treatments for EAB. If you stop treating the tree, it will be attacked and eventually killed.

No new ash trees should be planted. Plans should be made to identify and begin removal of the ash trees in the public right of way before they die en masse. Waiting for the trees to die can overwhelm tree removal resources and become very costly. On Main Street, there are ash trees 4" DBH at 147 and 159 that are already heavily infested with borers (not emerald ash borers). These trees should be removed promptly to help reduce the pest pressure on other trees in the area.

Diversity of Street Trees is good on Main Street.

There are many different species represented in the relatively short area observed on Main Street. These include, ash, callery pear, red maple Norway maple, red oak, pin oak, little leaf linden, Japanese scholar tree, silver maple, honey locust, London plane, Japanese lilac, Kwansan cherry and even viburnum. There is an over representation of pin oak and callery pear. You should avoid planting these species in the future not only because they are over represented, but because they have problems that make them undesirable as street trees. Callery pear has a tendency to break apart in storms and pin oak is highly susceptible to bacterial leaf scorch.

To further increase the diversity on Main Street, you can utilize species that are appropriate for the vacant spaces under high voltage electrical conductors. It is the high voltage conductors at the top of the pole that create the need for extensive pruning of tall trees. Lines lower on the pole such as house voltage electric lines, phone and cable television lines, typically do not conflict with trees and are rarely cleared of branches by pruning. The one Japanese lilac tree on Main Street is doing well and is a nice compact tree. You can also investigate planting upright viburnum such as blackhaw. Carolina silverbell is also a small-growing tree that could be planted as well as redbud, sourwood, Japanese snowbell and stewartia.

In areas not constrained by overhead high voltage conductors, taller growing trees that can be planted include hackberry, hornbeam, hop hornbeam, black gum, willow oak, chestnut oak, yellowwood, little leaf linden, and lacebark elm.

Main Street Assessment
October 7, 2015

Investors Savings Bank

In response to replacing trees in the vicinity of Investors Bank, there is only one sidewalk cutout and I do not believe there is room for another cutout without blocking the clock, the street light or obstructing the view of drivers coming out the side street. One tree can go in this cutout and it does not have to have a narrow crown. With only one tree in that location, view of pedestrians or passing traffic will only be obscured for a very short time as they pass the bank. I do not believe one tree will pose a realistic obstruction to the view of the bank. The choice of the tree you place will be constrained by the size of the cutout and possibly overhead electrical conductors.

Should you have any questions on any aspects of this report, Please contact me for clarification.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin L. Scibilia
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