

The Shade Tree Committee Plans to Make Bernardsville a Cooler and Greener Place

The Bernardsville Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STC) is a long-standing arm of the Bernardsville Borough Council, led by STC Co-Chairs Lou Matlack and Ann Wazeter, with the well qualified team of enthusiasts and professionals in the field of forestry and tree management. In addition to Lou and Ann, the Committee is comprised of, Sharad Sathe, Jane Agresti, Anne Peterson, Roberta Ruschmann, William (Jerry) Fischer, Dennis Galway, Paul Becker (Bernardsville Environmental Liaison) and Mikael Salovaara (Borough Council Liaison). Collectively, they are authorized to monitor and improve the management of the Bernardsville community forest.

Currently the Shade Tree Committee has created an ad hoc committee for tree planting, charged with working on a proposal to be made to the NJ Forest Service with the hopes of being awarded a \$25,000 grant to plant trees in Bernardsville residential neighborhoods. The ad hoc committee members are Project Leader, Jerry Fischer, as well as Ann Wazeter, Dennis Galway, Marilyn Dee (Bernardsville Garden Club), Maureen Robinson (Friends for a Greener Bernardsville) and Lou Williams. The grant application submittal deadline is June 1, 2006 and award, if successful, will be made by mid-July. The main planting effort is scheduled for Spring of 2007. This Fall the committee will sponsor an initial tree planting event to kick off the program and engage teams of volunteers for the Spring efforts.

The focus of the grant program is to encourage and promote improvement in the community's residential tree canopy, thereby resulting in reduced power use for air conditioning during the summer months. This specific grant is part of the national "Cool Cities Community Stewardship Incentive Program," and submitting for this grant is an important step for STC and our community to take, and is supported by Mayor and Borough Council.

Through the efforts of the "Cool Cities" proponents, it has become common knowledge that a healthy and expanding tree canopy is beneficial in numerous ways to the quality of life – lower energy costs in summer and winter, cooler residences with or without air conditioning, more attractive neighborhoods with increased property values and a strong sense of increased pride in the community – a win-win situation for all involved.

If successful in receiving the grant, implementation of the planting plan will depend on the backing and participation of our volunteers and homeowners to supplement the initial planting efforts of the Bernardsville Public Works Department and later planting by one or more planting contractors.

This website will provide continuing information on the status of the planting program, site locations, tree sizes and species. Success in receiving and implementing the "Cool Cities" grant will depend largely on the cooperation and participation of volunteers and homeowners, first to assist in the initial planting, but later, in the subsequent maintenance and watering of the new trees. Interested residents willing to volunteer to help, please contact the Shade Tree Committee by mail at Borough Hall, or call the project leader, Jerry Fischer, at 908-766-2736. E-mails to jjerryfischer@verizon.net.