

# WHY DID PSE&G DESTROY TREES ON MANHATTAN AVENUE? HOW COULD IT HAPPEN GIVEN OUR LAWS AND CITY POLICY ON TREES?

## PFGF REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING INCLUDING SPECIAL COMMUNITY MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH - 7 PM VIETNAM VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTER IN PERSHING FIELD PARK SUMMIT AVENUE ENTRANCE NEAR CARLTON AVENUE

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Once again we have lost old growth trees that added beauty and shade to one of our streets and improved our environment. Two trees on Manhattan Avenue just west of Sanford lost part of their base, and are reduced to the tree trunks and a couple of limbs. Farther west on Manhattan there are two or three tree stumps left from what had been old sycamores. Thanks go to Ami McGill who, seeing the trees being hacked away, called Paul Amatuzzo, and to Paul who texted the Mayor, and to Mayor Fulop who ordered that this butchering be stopped immediately. In response to our outrage at what's happened, Richard Dwyer of PSE&G requested a meeting with the community to explain PSE&G's actions. Laura Skolar has arranged for the discussion with Mr. Dwyer to take place this Tuesday evening at the PFGF monthly meeting. It will be first on the agenda so if you can come, please get there by 7PM. Mr. Dwyer has asked that we email him our questions in advance, if possible, to facilitate his addressing all concerns. His email is [Richard.DwyerJr@pseg.com](mailto:Richard.DwyerJr@pseg.com).

Many of you will remember when our neighborhood first became concerned about the lack of protection for old growth trees. Under a city "improvement" project, a large stretch of Summit Avenue sidewalk was repaved. For some reason, this "improvement" included removing very many old growth trees. Photographs and residents' outrage were recorded in a Jersey Journal feature article. We responded by working with Mayor Brut Schundler and the City Council to amend Chapter 321 of the City Ordinance governing trees. The amendments were approved unanimously by the Council on June 27, 2001 and approved by the Mayor on June 28, 2001. However, implementation has been spotty at best.

Particularly relevant to the actions of this week are the following sections of the Jersey City Code, Chapter 321:

### **Sec. 321-3: Tree Planting, Maintenance, and Removal**

A. (3) Furthermore to have a tree removed, the landowner must prove that the tree is diseased or poses a danger to public health, safety or property and that the disease or danger cannot be remedied by actions other than removal.

F. The requirements of this Section regarding removal of a tree shall apply to removal requested by the landowner and to a removal planned by any government or commercial entity.

### **Sec. 321-3.1 Removal of trees due to public improvements.**

A. Prior to the removal of three (3) or more trees in the public right-of-way by the City or its agent in order to facilitate the repair or installation of any public improvements, **including but not limited to** sewers, water mains, roads or sidewalks, the Director of Public Works shall convene a hearing to determine whether or not the City is in compliance with Chapter 321-3(A&F). [Bolding not in original text.]

Please, take a walk on Manhattan Avenue going west from Central and enjoy the majesty of the sycamore trees that are still with us. We have a Mayor who cares about keeping these trees and a law that gives them fairly good protection. But we still needlessly lose trees. We do hope you'll come to the meeting on Tuesday and that we will all join to assure a new era wherein Jersey City protects its old growth trees and expands our tree canopy.

Thank you.

Caroline KatzMount, Paul Amatuzzo, Laura Skolar