

AREA TREE COMPANIES DONATE SERVICES TO ASSIST TENAFLY WITH TREES FELLED BY SUPER STORM SANDY

On Friday, June 21, 2013, the Tenafly Department of Public Works utilized the donated services of several area tree services in a joint effort to remove unsightly storm damaged trees from the East Clinton Avenue boundary of the Tenafly Nature Center.

Subsequent to receiving approval on the methods for storm remediation and permission to perform a clean-up from Green Acres, Mayor Peter Rustin, working in conjunction with the Director of Public Works, sent a letter to several Bergen County Tree Companies asking them to donate their services to assist with a major clean-up of the wooded area along East Clinton Avenue. The targeted area was located in the vicinity of Buckingham Road, Kent Road, and Essex Drive. The woods, which are a part of the Tenafly Nature Center, also known as the Lost Brook Preserve, were filled with hundreds of downed trees as an end result of Superstorm Sandy. While the wooded area has long been admired for its naturally wild appearance, the recent visual of haphazardly fallen and splintered trees was viewed as an eyesore by many concerned residents. Inquiries about cleaning up the area were becoming more frequent at Council Meetings. The Council and the Department of Public Works were both desirous of addressing the issue. Director Beutel's discussions with the State's Office of Green Acres about the issue of cleaning up the area received the following response, "There is nothing that would preclude removal of downed trees." However, the enormous volume of work for the Department's limited staff and the anticipated high cost for contracting out the job of clean-up were both considered significant obstacles to taking immediate action.

In this era of cash strapped municipalities, reduced staffing levels, and tax conscientious residents, it is becoming more common for communities to reach out to their constituents for financial and volunteer support to help address issues that impact the quality of life. After considering the available alternatives, the Mayor sent letters to several companies in hopes of getting a few positive responses. A portion of the letter said, "As a tree company working in Tenafly, I am sure you aware of the significant damage done to our trees by recent storm events. We are pleased that firms such as yours have been available to serve our residents and as a result the look of our community has quickly returned to normal with one considerable exception. The woods along East Clinton Avenue, a principal gateway to Tenafly are filled with downed trees, and despite this being a totally natural occurrence, it certainly dilutes the visual enjoyment one normally experiences when entering our town. I am offering all of the tree service companies that work in Tenafly an opportunity to give back to our community. It is our hope that should enough companies accept this offer, along with our DPW crews, we could in one day make a significant improvement in the streetscape of East Clinton Avenue."

The Borough of Tenafly took a chance in making such a bold request of local area businesses, but it was greatly rewarded by positive responses from four well-known professional tree service companies, A Cut Above from Englewood, Arrow Tree Service from Old Tappan, DeCarlo Tree Service of Tenafly, and Ken's Tree Care from Northvale. Each of the companies agreed to donate one tree crew with equipment for one day to perform tree clearance work solely at the East Clinton site.

After receiving these responses, Bob Beutel, DPW Director, designed a work program which was reviewed with company representatives at a meeting convened at the Tenaflly Public Works office. The work force consisted of four tree crews comprised of tree company employees. The Tenaflly DPW crew coordinated safety and traffic control. The work crews ranged in size from 5-7 people, for a total of 24 laborers. The work day was scheduled for Friday, June 21, 2013, and commenced at 7:30 a.m. The redirection of vehicular traffic was handled by the DPW, which guided cars around the work area with barriers, cones and signage. The on-site work effort was jointly supervised by Ken Kraus, Tenaflly DPW General Foreman, and Frank DeCarlo, Principal of DeCarlo Tree Service. Each work crew was assigned to a separate area within the work zone. The crews worked for a block of five hours each, exclusive of packing up. Lunch was provided by the Borough at the conclusion of the work day. The Borough also thanks Choice Homes for providing sanitary facilities at the work site.

The primary on-site work activities consisted of tree removal, dead wood removing, and wood chipping. According to Bob Beutel, DPW Director, “over one hundred trees removed from the site. The majority were put through wood chippers and redirected back into the forest. Bigger logs were hauled away. At the end of the day, the site along East Clinton was noticeably cleaner and the natural beauty was enhanced by the removal of the dead trees.”

Additional information about the firms and employees that participated in the work day, accompanied by photos of the work area can be viewed on the Tenaflly Borough website at <http://www.tenafllynj.org>

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