

# Amherst Tree Advisory Committee continues to respond to storm damage

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*(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles submitted by the Tree Advisory Committee to provide residents with ongoing information about removal and replacement of trees lost in the October 2006 storm.)*

The purpose of this article is to introduce the Amherst Tree Advisory Committee, its purpose, membership and activities.

The TAC is a committee of citizen volunteers brought together by Town Highway Superintendent Robert Anderson following the October 2006 ice storm, to provide advice and expertise in dealing with the enormous challenge of recovering from the storm's destruction and impact across the town.

Members of the group offered backgrounds and experience in forestry, landscape planning, horticulture inspection, woodland management, municipal grants consulting, community development and master gardener training.

Shortly after its formation, the committee developed a mission statement and the following goals and objectives, which were reviewed and approved by the Town Board in April 2007:

- Facilitation and communication of information to residents and community leaders;
- Removal of damaged and hazardous trees in a safe and efficient manner;
- Development of criteria for stump and debris removal;
- Remediation and preparation of soil and land parcels for the planting of new trees;
- Recommendations on the selection of tree species for reforestation;
- Recommendations of a reforestation plan;
- Coordination of volunteer tree planting teams;
- Assistance to the town in preparing a master plan for community tree planting activities.

During the past year the committee has met regularly to review and discuss a range of issues, including tree loss estimates, GIS mapping of damaged trees by section and neighborhood, the variety of trees remaining in various sections of the town, estimates and bids for cutting and removal, requirements and costs for stump grinding and site

preparation, sources and costs for new tree stock, selection of tree varieties and purchase and planting timetables.

Members have worked with the countywide Re-Tree WNY Program, attended Town Board meetings, and assisted with research and evaluation of data.

Articles in this series to follow will provide Amherst residents a review of work that has been accomplished in the past year to begin the process of recovery from the storm and its impact on the town's tree canopy, and also outline plans for the coming year involving tree selection, purchase and replanting.

It is the committee's hope that these articles will also offer a more in-depth picture of the challenges and complexities of the recovery and replanting project and will encourage residents to become part of the process as volunteers and by helping to care for the new trees to be planted in their neighborhoods.