

First a recap...

In 2016, two of our residents...Leslie Frankish and Holmes Hooke, began an inventory of the trees of Chautauqua. By the time they'd finished, last year, they had discovered what gives the Chautauqua landscape its distinctive beauty, how it developed over time..and what are the threats to its existence. Sadly, if things continue as is, in the next 10 years, we will be living in a neighbourhood with significantly fewer trees.

So here's the good news...both Leslie and Holmes have come up with a way to reverse this trend. The first thing they did was make a presentation before Town Council to gain approval to develop a community tree plan...a tree plan identifies the distinct qualities to be protected and ensures appropriate trees are planted in the future. This past December, the Chautauqua Community Tree Plan was accepted by the Town...this was a BIG win.

The next step was to devise a Rejuvenation program...actually planting trees. Lesliemapped out all the trees in our neighbourhood and identified spots where new ones could be planted.

This year was Phase 1...included Circle and Wilberforce. The Town has been great at providing logistical support and cheering us on...but we have to bare the costs of purchasing both the the trees and labour to plant them..for both public and private land. We knew the cost to homeowners could be a potential stumbling block to success, so we raised funds so that no one is obliged to pay...the CRA has generously donated 2400.00 and an additional 20,000 was raised from residents.

During Feb and March of this year, residents of both Wilberforce and Circle were invited to a presentation to learn about the tree canopy and given the choice as to whether they'd like a tree on their property. Of the 55 properties on these streets, 37 attended our information sessions with 36 enthusiastically agreeing to participate. I am happy to announce that when finished, hopefully next week, there will be 74 new trees planted in Chautauqua..the majority of them Oaks.

We have developed a partnership with a Niagara College's seed germination program which means that the rest of the plantings will be done with the actual progeny of our neighbourhood heritage oaks. This is a magnificent opportunity for an urban forest. As the seedlings mature

and funds are raised, we will continue street by street through the rest of Chautauqua. At that time, residents on each street will be contacted and invited to participate.

For more information on all this, a website, mychautauqua.ca, is under construction and will be launched later this spring. It will be full of information about the Great Chautauqua Tree Canopy...it's history (surprisingly fascinating), the types of trees recommended to maintain our distinct landscape as well as other information...including details about the great Chautauqua Oaks Rejuvenation Project..and how you can help including donations...

Please walk the streets of Wilberforce and Circle and note all the new trees with green ribbons flying in the breeze...we leave our neighbourhood with a beautiful legacy...