

September 4, 2007

Mayor Bell & Common Council Members
7525 W. Greenfield Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214

RE: Removal of Street Trees for Drive Approaches

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

In July of 1991, the Common Council approved a policy for inclusion in the City's "Policies and Procedures Manual" describing procedures that are to be followed by the Public Works Department's Forestry Division regarding the removal and replacement of trees in the area between the walk and curb lines necessitated by the installation of a driveway approach when requested by the adjacent property owner. Briefly, when such requests are made, the Forestry Division removes the tree and either, in rare occasions, transplants the tree or, more commonly, simply cuts the tree down. All costs associated with either procedure, including the value of the tree in the event it is cut down, are paid entirely by the adjacent property owner.

While such requests for this service are relatively infrequent, when made, they most often involve the removal (cutting down) of a fairly well developed mature tree. As such, in addition to the cost of removing the tree and grinding out the stump, in accordance with the policy, the property owner is also assessed for the value of the tree removed utilizing the current "Guide for Plant Appraisal" to determine its value. It would not be uncommon for the resulting total bill for such removal to exceed \$1,000.

Heretofore, the money received for all costs associated with such removals was placed in the City's general fund meaning that Public Works had to absorb all of the costs in its budget, including the purchase of replacement trees. With tight budgets now being the norm, a number of services have been reduced by the Department to comply with the budget guidelines. One of these cutbacks has been in street tree planting. Where the Department used to have a tree planting program that assured the replacement of trees lost to disease, accidents and vandalism in any one year with new trees being planted the following year, the replacement time now frequently is two years. In order to get back to a one year planting cycle, additional funds for the acquisition of new trees is needed. Placing money received from the removal of trees for driveway approaches would certainly help that effort. As such, I respectfully request permission to have all such money received from tree removals for driveway approach installation be placed in the Department's account for acquiring new trees.

I will be available to answer any questions Council Members may have regarding this request.

Yours truly,

Michael F. Pertmer
Director of Public Works

cc: M. Rushmer, G. Schmid