

## Haddon Township Shade Tree Commission

On February 26, 2008, the Township Commissioners passed Resolution #2008-039, to ratify the Haddon Township Shade Tree Commission ("STC"). With this bold move, all trees and woody shrubs within the Township right-of-way of our roads, all municipal owned properties and wooded parcels that are less than 0.5 acres, are now protected under the Shade Tree Management Act of New Jersey. The STC will spend the next 10 months assessing the overall health of each tree, preparing applications for grants to purchase new trees and equipment and developing administrative procedures for any proposed activities that will impact our trees.

The top priority of the STC will be to assess each tree and determine their hazard classification, based on a scale from 0-12(12 being the highest hazard). We will be using the "Tree Hazard Evaluation Form" created by the International Society of Arboriculture. This is a scientific and honest approach to evaluate our trees. We will than prioritize our trees that are healthy, but need maintenance pruning. Pruning these trees will increase the overall health of the tree and enhance the aesthetics of our Town. Lastly, we will be identifying locations for future trees to be planted. The STC estimates that we can plant 90-100 trees per year, throughout the entire Township. All trees will be native with some selected non-native species, non-invasive and fitted properly for the space between the sidewalk and the road.

Every year the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry offers up matching grants to eligible municipalities. Now that Haddon Township has an approved "Community Forestry Management Plan", we are eligible for matching grants up to \$25,000! The matching funds from the Township will come in the form of labor to manage and plant the trees, so as long as the funds continue to be **allocated by the State**, this will never cost the Haddon Township tax payer an additional dime. Please feel free to contact the STC at 856-854-1176, extn. 4200, to put your name on a list for new shade trees for your home or if you have any questions regarding any existing shade trees.

The STC is currently ironing out procedures for any proposed activities that will impact a jurisdictional shade tree. For example, removal or pruning of a tree or new side walks or driveways that will impact the roots of a tree. The majority of the time, the Township and the stellar crew from the Department of Public Works will be taking care of our trees, but a resident has the right to hire a contractor to plant a new tree or prune or remove and existing shade tree, if they do not want to wait. However, there are certain requirements. To remove a tree will require an approval from the STC. The decision will be based on the assessment of the tree and the majority decision made by the STC. To prune a tree, the insured tree service will have to notify the municipality seven days prior to the commencement of the work. To plant a new tree, simply notify the STC to approve the species. Certain species do not make good shade trees and end up costing more than they are worth in the long run, so the STC wants to make sure that Haddon Township plants smart.

We believe that these changes to the management of our shade trees will not only help increase the potential of our Township, but will also help create a healthier, greener more desirable place to live and something we can all get involved with and take pride in.