

I am writing to advocate for continued tree care programs by the Montgomery Parks (MP) department.

Living 1/2 block from Silver Spring Intermediate Park (SSI), I have taken full advantage for 35 years of green space at SSI (we call it "The Park"). I've seen the role the trees play at The Park - providing shade, beauty, places for people of all ages to play around. The Park is a small one, and enjoyed by so many people (and animals), in so many ways.

Fortunately some 30 years ago, MP asked me what I thought was needed at the park, and, consulting with my neighbors, recommended some shade trees to be planted along side the playground equipment, as the area received direct sun in the afternoon. Those 3 tulip poplars have improved the "user experience" for everyone.

Subsequently, MP started a Tree Steward program and I was thrilled to be invited to join. I anticipated that this would give me knowledge and access to the MP arborists, through whom I could request additional tree care, tree plantings, and partner in tree maintenance. This proved to be a valued partnership that I have continued to this day. Even though the Tree Steward program is no longer active, I still know who to email or call when a tree situation needs immediate attention (downed park tree blocking the street due to the derecho), assessment (decaying limbs about to fall on playground equipment), or future planning (requesting new trees to be planted where mature oaks were dying). Most recently, I emailed the arborists concerning several trees that were dead, with limbs beginning to fall - these trees were in areas where people frequently walk and play, including a spot where 2 little girls had created a fairy house. Those trees are now gone and no longer a threat to life and limb.

Thank you for your attention, and please continue to fund Montgomery Parks tree care. I invite you to join me at the SSI Park for a tour, so I can show you and describe the role the trees in this little park have added to our community.

Trees are a many-decade project, that thrive when well cared for. It's worth the cost.

Ann Lafferty