

PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE  
REPORT ON THE WALK-AROUND

On 2 September 2021, the Parks and Grounds Committee walked around the Village, observing conditions in the parks and along the streets. Committee members included Bruce Pirnie (Chair), Paula Durbin, and Julian Mansfield, ex officio. Accompanying the Committee were Council member Al Muller and Nick Scaletta, Bartlett Tree Experts, serving as arborist.

#### HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FRIENDSHIP PARK

##### Potted Trees

The two small trees in large earthen plots next to the portico have large brown patches that indicate failing health. The Committee recommends that these two small trees be replaced, either with new arborvitae or another suitable plant.

##### Hedges and Lawn

The holly hedge along the edge of the brick walkway is leggy, scraggly, and prone to dying, leaving unsightly gaps. The Village has several times reinforced this hedge with new plants, but to little effect. Its poor condition detracts from the appearance of the Park. In several places, the lawn lies below the edge of the brick walkway as it ascends towards the Center on both sides of the portico.

Unevenness between walkway and surrounding terrain can present a tripping hazard. On 9 July 2021, Susan Bruckner suffered a serious accident while walking in the Park. She inadvertently left the brick walkway, lost her footing, and fell, fracturing her left ankle.

The Committee recommends that the lawn bordering the brick walkway as it ascends to the Center be raised even with the top edge of the walkway. One technique would be to cut and lift sod along the edge, add top soil as needed, and replace the sod even with the walkway.

The Committee recommends that the Village entirely remove the existing holly hedge and replace it with a dense, easily pruned evergreen hedge. This hedge should be pruned so that it is flush with the edge of the walkway, thus inducing people to stay on the walkway.

#### WILLIAM TYLER PAGE PARK

Page Park presents a pleasing appearance with lush grass and healthy trees. Both members think the vigorous young trees should not be removed. While generally pleased with the appearance of the Park, the two Committee members differ regards its future. One member approves the general layout of the Park, including the broad expanse of lawn where from her window she has seen children playing catch for example. This member sees no need for more planning. The other member desires more large shade trees and he feels that the Park lacks coherence and could be much improved. This member advocates pursuing a comprehensive, professionally developed plan.

#### NEW TREES

All of the street trees planted last year have survived and some are growing very well. However, a pin oak tree (tree #109) near street light 11 on upper Hills Plaza has numerous dead branches and the crown has entirely died. Our arborist thinks this tree is unlikely to recover and should be removed. The Committee recommends removal.

With advice from our arborist, the Committee identified eighteen locations for new trees, including four to replace those removed this summer. (See attached list and sketch for the locations and species of new trees.) The new trees are of diverse species to hedge against failure of one species and to offer pleasing diversity. However, they are also selected for consistent look, reflected in the predominance of oak trees. In general, the new trees will be caliper 2-3 as were the trees planted last year, which have grown well. However, the red maple in Humphrey Park will be a larger tree to accord with its unique position in the Park. The Committee recommends planting these eighteen trees.

## OTHER ITEMS

### Hanging Baskets

There are two hanging baskets near the Elizabeth and 4615 that partially obscure the parking signs mounted on the same light poles. It would be difficult to raise the hanging baskets because their brackets are sized to the tapering light poles, while it would be easy to lower the parking signs since they are secured by simple metal straps. The Committee recommends that the parking signs be moved below the hanging baskets.

### River Rock

Segments of verge on lower Hills Plaza next to the vehicular entrances to Highland House and to the Barlow Building are filled with large river rock, i.e., stones rounded by tumbling in flowing water. Walking over these rocks is precarious and risky, making these segments into dangerous obstacles. To date, the Committee knows of no accident caused by these river rocks, but one might occur at any time. The location is unsuitable for trees and the segments are so narrow and steeply pitched as to make grass or other ground cover problematic. The Committee recommends covering those segments with concrete slabs, thus extending the sidewalk to the curb.

## PROPOSED MOTIONS

The Committee proposes to make these motions:

That the Village plant eighteen new trees according to the plan presented in the Report of the Parks and Grounds Committee, 13 September 2021.

That the Village remove the holly hedge in Humphrey Park and replace it with a dense, easily pruned evergreen hedge pruned flush with the edge of the walkway.