

Richard Brummel
planet-in-peril.org
(516) 669-1741
rbrummel@att.net
June 5, 2013

Mineola Records Show Village Cut Down Over 1,000 Public Trees Since 2010

A request by environmental activist Richard Brummel to the Village of Mineola under the state Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) has revealed that from 2010 to 2013 the Village has cut down at least 1,035 trees on public streets and parks. (The number could be even higher, depending on a re-review of the records.)

In 2010, the village cut down 271 trees, in 2011 357 trees, in 2012 233 trees, and in 2013 174 trees, according to very non-detailed records from the department of public works.

Information was not provided on why each tree was cut down, its size, and in most cases the location of the trees removed. Only where more than one tree was cut down on a street were specific addresses included.

"I think many citizens would be surprised that Mineola cuts down so many trees each year -- a thousand since 2010. As shown by the very faulty decision to cut down eight mostly-healthy Sycamore/London Plane trees on Roslyn Road in April, this Village is way too heavy-handed and it abuses its discretion in destroying public greenery" Mr. Brummel said.

"I have been working with two Mineola residents to open up the Village's tree 'management' procedures to involve the public far more in the process -- especially those residents who DON'T want their beautiful trees cut down by the Village or by LIPA without 'due process' and a chance to be heard," Mr. Brummel said.

A request for pending trees removals was not fulfilled, and a further request has been filed with Village Clerk Joseph Scalero.

Information on the Roslyn Road trees cut is available on Mr., Brummel's website, planet-in-peril.org.

Mr. Brummel noted that the figure of trees cut could be hundreds higher because according to his notes some 424 trees were cut down or removed after Hurricane Sandy in 2012, but he said the figure seems so large that he wanted to re-read the raw data before relying on it for public purposes.

“Mineola residents repeatedly told me that they were losing many to over-aggressive Village removals for years and years; the data seems to raise a real question whether the perceptions and testimony of Village residents was ultimately more credible than the repeated denials from Village officials,” Mr. Brummel said. “Many streets saw multiple trees removed -- up to 15 at a time, especially in 2011.”

In many cases large numbers of trees were removed from single streets, according to the Village data.

In 2012 Saville Road had 12 trees removed; 6 were removed each from Horton Highway and Lincoln Avenue, and 5 were removed each from Foch Boulevard, Emory Road, Evergreen Road, Jerome Avenue, and McKinley Parkway.

In 2011 Andrews Rd. had 12 trees removed; Beebe Road had 10 trees removed; Dow Avenue had 12 trees removed; Marcellus Road had 15 trees removed; Latham Road had 11 trees removed; Roselle Street had 13 trees removed; Wellington Road had 10 trees removed; and White Rd. had 10 trees removed.

In 2010 Westbury Avenue had 9 trees removed, and White Road 10 trees removed.

These trees are essential to the environment to fight Global Warming and to provide habitat for wildlife. Beyond that they are part of the appeal of Long Island suburbs and create beauty. They are also wonderful living organisms that ask nothing but to be left to grow and help our planet. Replacing majestic healthy mature trees with saplings is bad policy,” Mr. Brummel said.

Though a resident of East Hills, Mr. Brummel, 52, who grew up in Roslyn, became involved in Mineola environmental issues in January 2013 when he noticed a massive Red Oak tree behind a boarded-up home on Roslyn Road and urged the Village to make an effort to preserve it.

In January he submitted a petition with about 200 signatures collected in Mineola from residents and visitors urging the Board to take some action to protect the Red Oak on Roslyn Road, and in April he submitted a petition with several dozen signatures of Mineola residents opposing the destruction of the Sycamore/ London Plane trees.

Mr. Brummel said he would re-review the Sandy data promptly and inform the media.

Mr. Brummel apologized in advance if the names of any streets were misspelled.

#end#