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November 16, 2021

Dear Supervisor Bosworth, Councilwoman Lurvey and members of the Town Council,

Residents Forward enthusiastically supports the Town's new Tree Code. We appreciate the transparent and collaborative way it was constructed. As Councilwoman Lurvey stated, "This isn't my tree code, this is OUR tree code."

As you may know, Residents Forward was formed because of trees. Our founder, Myron Blumenfeld went to a BZA hearing to ask for one tree to be planted by a gas station on Port Washington Boulevard. From there, Residents went on to plant hundreds of trees up and down Main Street, by the post office and at the town dock. The promotion and preservation of trees, and a healthy tree canopy, is central to our history and mission. Trees are instrumental in removing carbon dioxide, promoting storm water absorption, fostering habitat for wildlife, and providing shade-- which lowers cooling and heating costs and protects the resiliency of our infrastructure while enhancing the beauty of our community.

We are thrilled that the Town of North Hempstead has not only undertaken the long-needed process of amending our Tree Laws, but has worked with community groups, civic associations and residents to ensure that the proposed amendments include creation of a Tree Master Plan and inventory, prioritization of native species, reconstituting the Town's Tree Advisory Committee to include residents, and the establishment of a Tree Preservation Fund and Tree Establishment Bond for investing in our tree resources.

We believe the proposed amendments represent an enormous step forward for our Town—and provide the framework for future discussion and innovation to grow and improve the Town's tree canopy.

We are particularly pleased that public education is part of the policy and stand ready to help. In fact, this April, Residents Forward will be collaborating with the Town of North Hempstead and Fiber Artist Allison White on a "Yarn Arms" project spotlighting trees throughout the Town.

As this policy moves toward implementation, Residents Forward requests the following measures to ensure impact, collaboration and solutions to issues that have long plagued Town of North Hempstead trees:

1. Appointing members of the Tree Advisory Committee with the qualifications and skills to shape a robust Master Plan:
 - Arborists with certifications and specific training in native trees.
 - Town employees engaged in tree planting and removal
 - Landscape ecologists or landscape architects
 - Representatives from the business improvement districts
 - Representatives from the environmental community
2. Ensuring that meetings are accessible to the public.
3. Ensuring an expeditious and ecologically sound process for tree removal and replanting, prioritizing cases that present a safety concern or risk the spread of disease.
4. Investing in silva cells, or similar infrastructure, to promote healthy root growth and prevent damage to sidewalks.

In closing, we fully support the proposed amendments and urge the Town of North Hempstead to adopt this policy, providing a framework for tree preservation and protection for decades to come.

Patricia Class
 Executive Director

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