

## **Important Reminder about Trees Near Streets and Sewer Easements**

### **(Baldwin Township Code of Ordinances - Chapter 25 - Trees)**

*We all enjoy the beauty that our shade trees bring to homes and to our community. Still, recent experiences with heavy winter snow storms and severe wind and rain storms remind us of the increasing dangers posed by ever maturing trees growing near or overhanging some of our residential streets. At the same time, the increased scrutiny of our sewer system and the substantial resources expended in recent years to inspect, repair and maintain our sewers has also brought home just how much harm can result when invasive roots damage sewers and allow stormwater to infiltrate into our sewer system, causing a tremendous strain on our community's purse strings and great harm to our environment.*

*In order to protect against the dangers posed by overhanging trees, as well as to protect our critical sewer lines located within our street right-of-ways or across our front or rear yards, Chapter 25 of the Baldwin Township Code of Ordinances prohibits planting or maintaining trees within the street right-of-way (which generally extends about 12 feet into your front yard from the edge of the curb), or whose roots may invade our streets or sewers. The Ordinance also requires property owner to trim trees so that its limbs do not overhang our public streets. The Township is empowered to Order the removal or trimming of trees that violate the Ordinance and even permits the Township to enter and remove offending trees or limbs, and to lien the property or pursue the owners in court for reimbursement of its costs and fees.*

*The following are some highlights of the Street/Sewer Right-of-Way Tree Ordinance:*

- No Willow trees permitted anywhere in the Township
- No Maple or Poplar trees within 50 feet of street or sewer right-of way.
- No tree (trunk, roots, or branches) within or overhanging any street or street right-of-way
- No trees located in manner that obstructs street lights, signs, or safe views of passing vehicular traffic
- No old, damaged, weak or other trees or branches are allowed to remain in any location where it may pose a danger to motorists or pedestrians were it to fall over in a storm.
- No tree (or its roots or branches) within any sewer easement or right-of-way.
- Residents living on the 'lower' side of their street who may have sewers running through the rear yard should become familiar with the location of any sewers or sewer easements (usually 10-20 feet wide) traversing their property and take care not to allow any trees or structures within such easements, and to refrain even from planting trees close to the easement that may have roots systems which tend to grow toward and invade sewer lines.
- The Township is also authorized to Order the trimming or removal of any offending trees any tree located within or overhanging any street right-of-way, or which otherwise poses a potential danger to the motoring public, or whose root system has invaded or damaged or poses a risk of invading and damaging the public sewer system.
- Upon the owner's failure to remove or trim a tree as ordered, the Township may issue a citation (with fines up to \$1,000); it may also remove the offending tree and lien the property and/or bring a lawsuit against the owners to obtain reimbursement of its expenses incurred in removing the tree (together with its legal costs and fees).
- The Township will be conducting a review of our street trees over the next several months, and property owners with offending trees that pose a risk to our streets or sewers may receive notice to remove such trees or be subject to fines, removal costs and other expenses.
- Please inspect your own trees and take steps now to maintain them for the safety of others.

[\*\*\(Click here to read the Full Text of the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 25 - Trees\)\*\*](#)