



## Village of Mamaroneck Parks & Recreation

### **Statement Regarding Florence Park Renovations**

There have been numerous inquiries regarding the Florence Park renovations, specifically the topic of tree removal, but also the addition of a basketball court, and other modifications of blacktop spaces. I would like to provide clarity on these matters and to answer the concerns of the community. First and foremost, I want to emphasize that the blacktop footprint of Florence Park will remain unchanged. Contrary to speculation, the Village is not reducing green space to create new recreation space. As part of the overall design, the existing bocce court will be removed, blacktopped, and repurposed into a new recreation space. This will provide an open area for children and patrons to engage in activities such as biking, playing with chalk, or simply socializing with friends. As this does not reduce green space, but increases the play area, it is a positive improvement for the park design.

Regarding the addition of a basketball court, it is essential to clarify that this decision is not based on any notion of making the park pay-to-play, nor to increase blacktop space or reduce green space. The Village has no intention on permitting organized recreational programs or groups to organize in Florence Park. For this to be a viable operation, there would be the additional requirements to install other amenities that were not included in the approved renovation plan; these include dedicated parking, water, and restroom facilities. The additional basketball court will be located on an area which is already a paved area of the park, the Village is simply installing new basketball hoops and painting court lines on an already existing piece of blacktop. The addition of a basketball court is in response to the current basketball courts often experiencing overcrowding, with multiple users sharing a single half court due to limited space. The Village will address this issue by expanding the existing basketball facilities to better accommodate this increase in demand.

The proposed tree removals at the park have raised numerous concerns in the community. After meeting with the Chair of the Tree Committee prior to construction, it was determined that some trees, including mature ones, would require removal as part of the park renovation process. The initial plan was to have included the removal of 22 trees, but after careful consideration and consultation with contractors, this number was reduced to 17. The decision to remove any trees was guided foremost by safety concerns, particularly those related to tree root lifting and cracking sidewalks, play areas, or interfering with park infrastructure. While the Village and the Tree Committee share a commitment to preserving mature trees, it was determined that certain non-native trees posed significant safety risks and needed to be replaced with native species in more suitable locations.

Through ongoing discussions and site visits, we were able to preserve additional trees, reducing the total number of trees to be removed to 14, (with 9 being non-native and slated for replacement with native species). It's worth noting that the Village has been actively engaged in tree reforestation efforts throughout the Village, planting over 250 new trees in the past three years alone. The Parks

Department, Village and Tree Committee remain steadfast in our commitment to preserving trees and greenery, prioritizing safety while enhancing our parks' aesthetics and usability.

The renovations at Florence Park will provide the community with a long-awaited improvement to a recreational space which will provide enjoyment for residents of all ages. The playground will feature a variety of state-of-the-art equipment catering to different age groups, ranging from 2 to 12 years old. Shade structures will be additionally installed to provide relief from the heat, with one structure covering the medium-sized playground structure with the combining of natural shade provided by trees near the toddler playground area. We are confident that these park renovations and improvements will be well-received and enhance the quality of life for all who reside in the Village of Mamaroneck, and the next generation.

Jeff Ahne  
General Foreman of Parks