

Bloomfield Messenger



Bloomfield's own weekly newspaper

April 12, 2024

www.BloomfieldMessenger.com

Priceless 16 pages

TOWN COUNCIL ENDORSES BLOOMFIELD TO BE A TREE CITY USA COMMUNITY



TREE CITY USA®

By Paula Jones
CEEC Chair

Trees for Bloomfield Co-Chair

The Bloomfield Town Council demonstrated its commitment to maintaining a healthy natural environment by allocating funds in the 2025 Fiscal Year Budget to support Bloomfield becoming a **Tree City USA Community**. The Council recognizes that Bloomfield needs a healthy tree canopy in order to flourish.

What does it mean to be designated (by the Arbor Day Foundation) as a Tree City USA community?

There are four standards that must be met: (1) existence of a tree board/department responsible for the community's trees; (2) existence of a tree care ordinance for the town's public trees; (3) maintenance of a community forestry program



with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita for the planting, care, and removal, and replanting of town trees; and (4) an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

Why is this important and why is the Council doing this now?

The four standards provide a solid framework to maintain and grow Bloomfield's tree cover. The Trees for Bloomfield Initiative (TFB) of the past three years has focused on increasing residents' awareness of the important role trees play

See TREES page 9

Photo: Celebrating Arbor Day in 2023. This year's celebration and proclamation, organized by the Bloomfield Beautification Committee, will be on April 27, 1:30 - 2:30, at The Arboretum at Bloomfield Town Hall.

Photo by Paula Jones

From Page One

in many aspects of community health. Trees reduce pollutants in the air, reduce heat from pavement, absorb storm water runoff, and add to the aesthetic enjoyment of our surroundings.

Additionally, this is a critical step for implementing Bloomfield's Energy Plan. How so? Trees play a critical role by sequestering carbon as well as by providing the other benefits already mentioned. Therefore tree planting (specifically becoming a Tree City USA community) is one of 16 implementation actions recommended in Bloomfield's Climate Emergency Energy Plan (CEEP), completed in December, 2022.

The existence of this Plan has already paid dividends for the Town. Standard & Poor cited the existence of the CEEP in reaffirming Bloomfield's AA+ rating this past January. More recently, the town's consultant (FHI Studio) for Bloomfield's Plan of Conservation and Development stated that Bloomfield is ahead of many municipalities by having the CEEP. Having a plan is good - but starting to implement that

plan is better. Becoming a Tree City is recommended because it's low-hanging fruit (pun intended) in that the cost is relatively low, the designation can be achieved using local resources, and it enhances our surroundings by focusing on our trees.

The Conservation Energy and Environment Committee (CEEC) is committed to taking a lead role in getting Bloomfield designated. Through CEEC's three-year partnership with the Bloomfield Beautification Committee (BBC) and town staff on the Trees for Bloomfield Initiative, TFB has made great strides in meeting Tree City standards #1 and #4. With the Council's recent budget allocation to support standard #3, we are confident that we can meet all the standards in 2024.

The Town Council deserves credit and our gratitude for recognizing the town's public trees as assets, and for investing in those assets. Bloomfield can look forward to joining our neighbors (Wethersfield, Hartford, and East Hartford) in becoming a Tree City USA community.