Project aims to line town roads with trees

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By JUNE PETERSON
Register Citizen Staff

WINSTED — A project to restore the leafy glory of the town's once tree-lined streets will take root Saturday when the Shade Tree Committee plants its first saplings.

The planting will take place at 9 a.m. along Meadow Street. The public is invited to share in the ceremony. Coffee and donuts will be served.

Mayor James A. Pettit will be at the ceremony, and members of the Board of Selectmen have also been invited. The committee will give Lewella Francis, president of the Winchester Historical Society, two pewter plates engraved to commemorate the planting of the first trees.

The planting of the six trees follows the completion of a survey of trees within city limits by members of the committee and Jamie Scrimgeour, an associate in the community lawyer's office. The inventory, organized by Scrimgeour, identified the tree species and assessed the health, condition and age of trees.

Scrimgeour, who helped to form the Shade Tree Committee, said he was inspired to replant trees along town streets when the last elm tree on Elm Street — diseased and dying — was cut down last year.

In July 1990 a forester from New York state spoke to a group of residents about forming a tree committee and conducting a survey of town trees.

Once the survey was completed, the group determined the order in which areas would receive plantings. Meadow Street, once lined with stately trees as seen in old photographs, was targeted as the first site, Scrimgeour said. In the spring the committee wants to continue with more plantings along Oak, Elm and High streets, he said.

On Saturday two small elm trees planted by Boy Scouts behind the town garage on Rowley Street will be replanted on Meadow Street. In addition, John F. Gauger Jr. has donated a maple tree for Meadow Street, Scrimgeour said. About six trees will be planted in all; it's still uncertain what other species will be planted, he said.

Meadow Street residents have responded enthusiastically to the project, he said. The trees will be planted in such a way as to avoid utility lines, Scrimgeour said.

A committee member will be appointed to care for the trees next year, he said.

Parking for the event will be available at the Son-Chief Electric building, he said.