

# Memorial Garden Tree holds same message as well-known Red Maple

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A steel tree has replaced a live one on Main St., but its message still stands.

Over the past eight years, the almost eight-year-old Red Maple tree that once resided on Georgetown's main drag became the victim to a number of instances that would result in its unfortunate demise: in 2007, it was disease, in 2013 it was the ice storm, and in between the two, cars leaving the nearby parking lot would sometimes back into it. The tree started to die and this summer, the Town of Halton Hills had it removed.

As soon as it was vacated, something was missing in the downtown. The maple tree, which provided shade over a bench and a garden in memory of Paul Thompson, who passed away in September 2013, was now just an empty space. So the

Downtown Georgetown BIA decided to do something.

Wendy Farrow-Reed, the BIA's manager, said a couple ideas were created to fill the space, including a stage, a gazebo and a sitting area. Sandy Mackenzie, BIA beautification committee chair, brought up the idea of constructing a steel tree after several safety concerns arose from the first ideas, and from there, it blossomed.

"We wanted to create a new focus point," Farrow-Reed explained. "But it had to fit."

After receiving a request for proposal from local artist Ken Hall, engineers got to work and constructed the new monument on Nov. 27.

The Memorial Garden Tree stands 20 feet high and 10 feet in diameter and will feature lighting within the overlying maple leaves. The steel, which rusts naturally, will not harm the nature sitting around and below

it, including the Mayor of Main St.'s memorial garden.

Due to backwards wiring, the lighting doesn't yet work, but Farrow-Reed is confident a quick fix is in store soon.

"The tree is not going to come down," Farrow-Reed said. "It is a permanent structure that will live well past my lifetime."

Farrow-Reed explained through budgeting and strategic planning, the project, which cost just under \$28,000, was paid for solely on BIA membership fees, and cost taxpayers nothing.

The BIA invites several members of the public who have voiced concerns about the point of the structure along Main Street to come see the new tree and take in what downtown Georgetown has to offer.

"This is something everybody can be proud of," she said. "People will talk about this for a long time."



The Memorial Garden Tree, constructed on Nov. 27, stands on Main St. in Georgetown. The structure is almost 20 feet high and 10 feet in diameter. Above, the view of the Tree on Main St. Left, BIA manager Wendy Farrow-Reed stands in front of the structure.

Photos by Kathryn Boyle



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