

Tree committee gets growing in Rodgers Forge

Planting is first stage of effort to increase local tree canopy

By Katie V. Jones

Larry Fogelson loves trees. With each tree that falls in his Rodgers Forge community, whether by storm or by age, Fogelson wants another one planted.

"I want every house with trees in front of it," Fogelson said. "A canopy of trees."

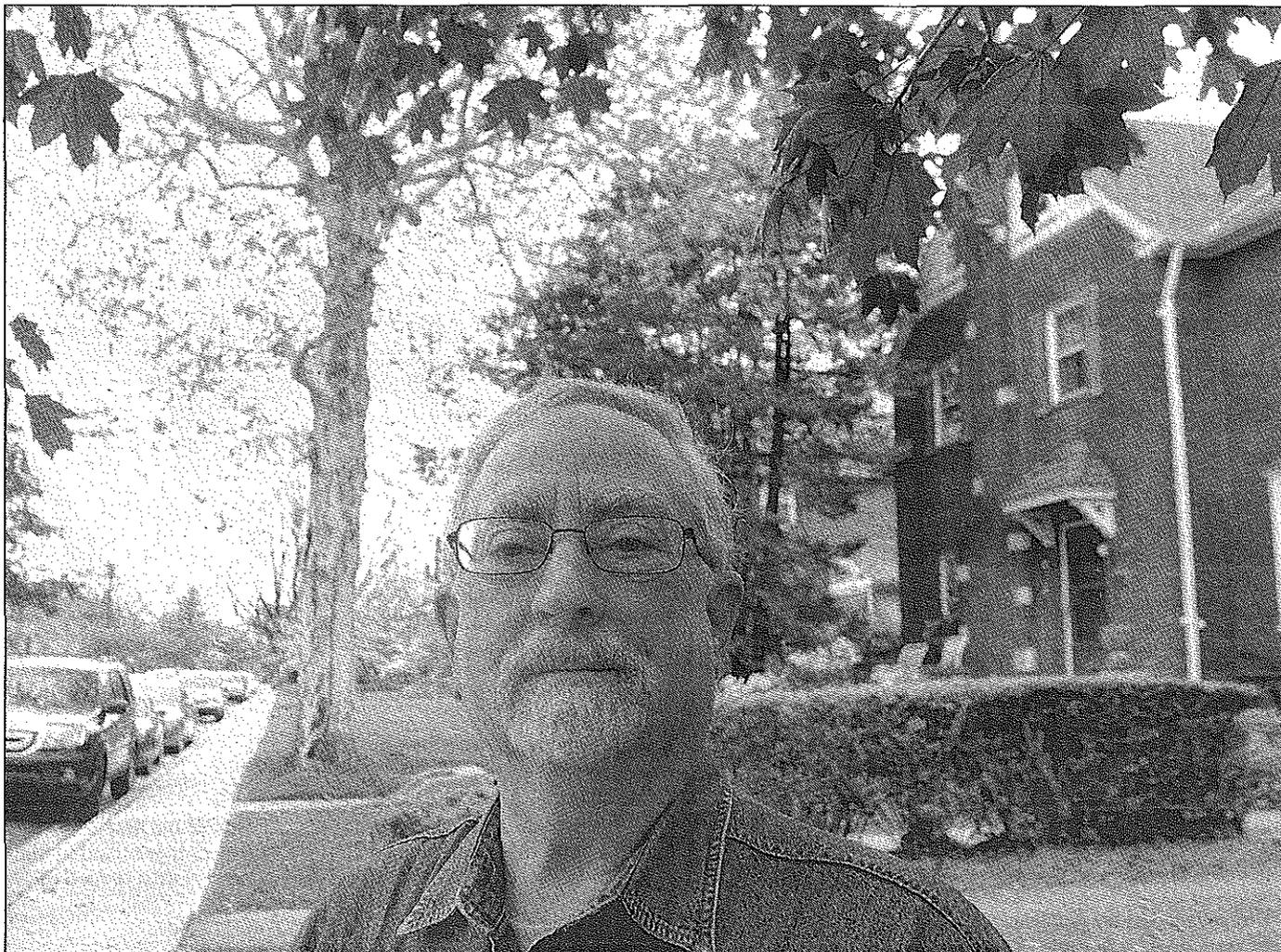
While there's still a lot of work to do in that regard, the new Tree Rodgers Forge Community is planning to plant nine trees the day after Arbor Day.

"There will be a planting ... on April 28; hardwoods that only can be put on publicly eased property," he said.

These particular plantings must be in the public rights of way and not interfere with any utilities. Of the 16 homeowners who expressed interest, only nine were approved.

'Any tree is better than no tree.'

Larry Fogelson,
Tree Rodgers Forge Community



STAFF PHOTO BY SARAH PASTRANA

Rodgers Forge resident Larry Fogelson, member of the Tree Rodgers Forge Committee, is organizing a tree planting on April 28. Fogelson is concerned about the declining tree canopy in the area.

Fogelson and his committee have been working with the organization Blue Water Baltimore, which selected the proper tree for each house, and will provide it for free with help from a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

While many people would have preferred flowering trees, Blue Water Baltimore will provide hardwoods such as oak, maple or black gum, according to Debra Lenik, volunteer coordinator with Blue Water.

"We're more focused on canopy trees," Lenik said. "They're larger and have more ecological benefits in general."

There are "superior benefits" to planting native trees, such as oaks and maples, according to Donald Outen, natural resource manager of the Forest Sustainability Program for Baltimore County, from enhancing wildlife habitats to providing nutrients important for water quality. Trees

also help save energy costs and enhance the aesthetic value of properties.

"One of our big interests is increasing the urban canopy," Outen said. "(Baltimore County) is better off than Baltimore City, but we could have more (trees)."

Each homeowner will receive information about their tree and how to care for it. For \$50, Blue Water Baltimore will plant the tree for the homeowner.

"People will have to water it," Fogelson said. "There will be some details provided."

Fogelson hopes that once people see how nice the trees are that there will be a greater response for the next planting in the fall.

"This round was successful — we're

having some trees planted," Fogelson said. "With time and education, we'll build up a little momentum to keep it going and get even bigger."

In addition to planting more trees, Fogelson's committee is also working with Baltimore County on other tree-related issues — namely requesting it to review its tree cutting policy.

"The county policy seems willing to take trees down, but they don't have a proactive policy that I know of to replace them," Fogelson said. "We sent a letter asking the county to stop cutting down trees around here and help us with a plan to replant our street with trees."

The group did receive an email response from Vince Gardina, director of the environmental protection and sustainability for the county, stating that the county was "looking at the issue," Fogelson said.

The group has not had any issues with BGE, Fogelson said. "I have seen them giving trees a haircut, but not taking them down completely," Fogelson said of the utility company.

While the trees provided by Blue Water Baltimore must be planted in state rights of ways, Fogelson encourages homeowners to plant trees, even decorative, in their private yards, too.

"Any tree is better than no tree," he said.