Resolution 2017 – 04 Regarding trees as elements in spatial planning, urban landscape and heritage in the city and its neighbourhoods

Considering the growing interest on the part of citizens and members of Heritage Montreal in quality spatial planning and the personality of neighbourhood urban landscapes as a dimension of the living environment, in the service of people of all ages who live, work or visit the city’s neighbourhoods as well as the downtown area;

Considering the vital role of mature trees—on streets and in parks, as well as those that are part of institutional ensembles or old gardens like that on the Notman House property—as a component of the identity and architecture of the urban landscape in the city’s neighbourhoods and along its major arteries;

Considering the deficiencies related to maintenance practices and the threats to this urban heritage from climate change, infestations such as the emerald ash borer, and visions of urban development that advocate densification or intensive land use without sufficient consideration for the qualities of the surroundings and for heritage;

The Annual General Meeting of the members of Heritage Montreal requests:

1. That mature trees in the city’s streets and neighbourhoods be recognized as integral to the heritage and identity of the urban landscape, and that they be treated according to best practices and using the requisite landscaping expertise, via sufficient maintenance and replacement programs as well as urban- and spatial-planning tools, including densification policies or eventual “requalification zones” as recommended in Bill 122 (the act to recognize that municipalities are local governments), and enforced through heritage and landscape expertise;

2. That programs for evaluation and replacement of trees on both public and private land as part of current emerald ash borer impact management efforts be administered with consideration for the trees’ heritage and landscape dimensions, applying the required expertise, both in the city’s neighbourhoods and in large heritage ensembles and sites such as Mount Royal and Parc Jean-Drapeau;

3. That discussions around improvements to ensembles in neighbourhood cores (e.g., churches and other houses of worship, community centres, schools, institutional properties) encompass not only concrete financing tools for conservation of these socially useful heritage buildings and sites, but also tree-planting and follow-up programs designed to improve the quality of the immediate urban environment, taking into account and respecting the architectural and landscape dimensions of these ensembles.