



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Parks Officials in Response to Avella Survey: Don't Bother Us, Call 311

TONY AVELLA March 9, 2018

Queens, NY – Today, State Senator Tony Avella hosted a press conference at his District Office to call attention to the shameful response by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to constituent complaints regarding dangerous and overgrown New York City trees.

Following the conclusion of a tree survey distributed to constituents, Senator Avella sent the location of hundreds of problematic trees throughout his District to DPR for inspection. A few weeks later, DPR responded with a list of 65 of the locations the Senator submitted on behalf of his constituents instructing the homeowners to call 311. The DPR response, according to Avella, is “disgraceful and a clear dereliction of duty.”

Immediately following the press conference, Senator Avella sent a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, DPR Commissioner Mitchell Silver, and the Corporation Counsel of the City of New York to call out DPR's response as negligent.

“I'm almost at a loss for words at how disgraceful this response was. For them to completely ignore an elected official's complaints is absurd. God forbid one of these trees, which have now been reported to them as problematic, injure someone or damage property the Mayor and the DPR Commissioner will be personally responsible,” **said Senator Avella.**

“Additionally, attempting to avoid doing any work and putting these requests off on a barely capable 311 is foolish. These trees were brought to their attention because of the dangers they posed to New Yorkers, their handling of these complaints furthers the notion that this Mayoral administration does not care about the residents of Northeast Queens. Shame on the Mayor and DPR for this treatment of their constituents,” **added Avella.**

The survey, conducted over the last month, was sent to homeowners throughout parts of Senator Avella's Northeast Queens District and asked for them to take a few moments to evaluate the condition of City trees in front of their property or on their block. 1,250 homeowners in District 11 had responded to a survey the Senator distributed and 66% of respondents said they feared for their safety as a result of a tree on their block. Additionally, 71% of respondents said they were completely unaware of DPR's "Tree and Sidewalk Repair Program."

Since before he even held elected office, Senator Avella has been a strong voice in the community fighting to reform the broken way the City addresses tree issues throughout the city. Senator Avella has also written legislation in the State Legislature (S1571) that would establish a task force to evaluate DPR's policies on tree maintenance.