To City of Alexandria leaders:

On Thursday, January 17 around noon, I left for a business trip out of state. When I returned home on the afternoon of Monday, January 20, I found that a large and very mature cedar tree in my front yard had been cut down to the ground - **without my knowledge or permission or any notification from anyone**.

On Tuesday morning January 21, I called the Alexandria Police Department to ask what to do with this obvious destruction of my personal property and they suggested I call the City of Alexandria Arborist to figure out what happened. I immediately called that number and left a message. After several hours without a returned call, I went to the website and filed a formal complaint with the City of Alexandria.

Shortly after, I received a phone call from an arborist, John Marlin, who explained to me that there had been MAJOR errors in communication regarding this tree. He ‘thought’ he had been communicating with the owner but, in fact, he had been communicating with the person(s) who filed the complaint.

From what I understand, a neighbor complained several months ago (he did not have the exact date in front of him and could not divulge the name of the neighbor) and he came out to check the tree. He determined that the tree had a ‘major split’ and needed to be removed. As the homeowner, I received NO notification of that visit or the decision to destroy my tree on my property. He checked on it again recently and seeing that the work order had not been completed, marked it for immediate removal – again – without any discussion with or notification to the homeowner! No hangtag, no phone call, no written letter, no email, no knocking on my door during his two visits to my property – NOTHING!

I travel a great deal for my work but always have my cell phone with me and access to email. In addition, when I am away I have someone come to the house each day so I would have received notification had it been left. In this day and age, there is absolutely no excuse for no contact.

Mr. Marlin apologized, accepted responsibility for the lack of notification from his department, and said there clearly was a huge error made in communication. He explained to me the issues with the tree and why it needed to be removed, but it is incomprehensible that NOT ONE WORD was ever discussed or shared with the homeowner over the multiple months this was an issue, an issue totally unbeknownst to me. There was plenty of time to have a conversation with me to help me understand the necessity for removal or to trouble-shoot other solutions which have been used throughout the city to save mature trees which are part of the charm and beauty in our city.

I have been a proud resident, homeowner and taxpayer of Alexandria City for nearly twenty years and am frustrated and angry at this carelessness and lack of concern for my personal property. That very large and mature tree provided shade to the front of my home and yard and its removal will undoubtedly cause an increase in my utility bills.

While I appreciate the explanation and apology provided to me, it falls short of the high expectations I have as a resident of our great City. I have read the information on your webpage about replanting and request the following services be completed immediately to make up for this tremendous error and lack of judgement.

1. Removal of the stump that was left from my tree.
2. New, mature tree planted in its place through your *Street Tree Replanting Program*

*If a City-owned tree is removed from the street in front of your home, the City will replant that tree at no cost to you. All that is required is your commitment to regularly water and care for the tree during its first few years of establishment (*[*Click Here for Maintenance Tips*](https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=18902#Tips_for_Maintenance)*). By participating in this program, you may also designate a species of your choice from the list of Arborist-approved street trees.*

I will await your timely reply,

Kathleen M. Welling

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