

TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Exeter Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2020

Members Present: Eileen Flockhart (chair), Sarah Sankowich, Sally Ward,
Gwen English, Deb Twombly, Greg Jordan

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Greg Bisson, and Jay Perkins

Meeting began at 9:00AM with Eileen Flockhart reading the 91-A-2 emergency preamble and calling the roll.

Eileen summarized a March 9 meeting she and Sara Sankowich had with the Lincoln Street School's Green Team that included teachers Keith Schmitt and Katie Pupino.

The students were asked about their favorite trees, and there was a discussion about the new tree that will be planted on the LSS grounds near the buddy bench. Their classroom projects include a writing activity, as well as drawing and taking photographs of trees. Thoughts about raising awareness of these projects during this pandemic and school closure include attempts to get television and newspaper coverage.

Eileen has visited Stratham Hill Nursery to look at trees. Chinese Elm and Sycamore are possibilities. These typically run \$300-\$500, but Dave Short, at the nursery, will work on a better price, perhaps in the \$250 range. Exeter Public Works will contact Dig Safe, and assist with planting the tree. Planting in June is a possibility.

Eileen Flockhart explained that Tree City USA has waived the Arbor Day requirement for reapplication to Tree City for this year due to the Covid-19 crisis. Volunteers should continue to log volunteer hours for that reapplication.

Discussions ensued about the selection of trees. We should consider trees that: offer shade, do not bear fruit, can withstand being climbed on by children and would be appropriate for this climate. Tulip poplar, Sycamore, Beech are possibilities.

Even though a tree planting date is uncertain, we need to select the tree type and perhaps reserve a tree while the selection is good. We agree that for this first tree, working with a local nursery would be best. Jay Perkins announced that Public works is willing to give us up to \$500 toward a tree.

Care and maintenance of newly planted trees is a concern, and we need to protect our investment. This could also be part of the learning experience for everyone in Town. Greg Bisson has tree diapers we could use to solve some of the issues and difficulties relating to watering. We could consider establishing a tree steward program, and can get details on that from a tree steward statewide program that Sara Sankowich is familiar with, and Greg Jordan also has information on the Natural Resources stewards. Perhaps a special TV production, or a YouTube video would be a useful educational tool.

TreeCityUSA signs (and probably a flag) will be in our hands soon, and we need to decide where to place the signs. The traffic island on Rt. 111 was proposed, as well as Lincoln Street. We want visibility as well as trees nearby.

Talked about expanding TreeCityUSA page and were advised that official Town committees should not have separate pages, and it would be most logical for us to connect with the already established Conservation Commission Facebook page which has a big following. Parks and Recreation is also a widely used site and they would be happy to help.

Bob Glowacky offered another idea about Thursday's 4:30 PM 'Weekly Report' which shares stories about what is going on in Town. This can include a 'green minute' (in video form) from various Exeter committees or individuals in Town.

The Tree Committee could put together a little video package promoting our ideas, and sharing tips on planting, pruning, and taking care of trees.

More discussions followed on the funding of gators and tree diapers, and how to set up a funding mechanism for people who would like to donate to this cause. Kristen Murphy stated that the Conservation Commission has a Conservation Fund and any donations to the Commission can get put into that fund. It is non-lapsing, and donations can be earmarked for a specific purpose.

Kristen Murphy mentioned two efforts she is hoping to connect to our group. One is the *Bud Burst* program of data collection she has begun with the classes at the Cooperative Middle School which they are doing online now. The other is the yearly tree distribution done by Peter Waltz. He is working on a video presentation about that, and they are trying to find a way to distribute the tree seedlings to LSS school 4th grade children. We should perhaps get involved with his efforts, and fold this in with what we're doing.

A specific date for our next meeting has not yet been made.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Gwen English