

DRAFT MINUTES (6/09/2021)
Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE

I. PRELIMINARIES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman)
Gwen English

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy, Jay Perkins, Bob Glowacky (Exeter, TV)

II. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:30AM and read out loud the meeting preamble which indicated that an emergency exists and the provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III(b) are being invoked. As federal, state and local officials have determined gatherings of ten or more people pose a substantial risk to the community and the meeting imperative to the continued operation of Town and government and services which are vital to public, health, safety and confidence. This meeting will be conducted without a quorum physically present in the same location and welcome members of the public accessing the meeting remotely.

III. OLD BUSINESS: Eileen moved to approve the May 19th, 2021 minutes as written, Gwen seconded the motion. Minutes approved as written.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Arbor Day 2021, June 3, at 4:00 at Gilman Park.

Eileen gave a brief summary of the event which was attended by Greg Bisson, Deb Twombly, Russ Dean, Eileen and Doug Flockhart, and Gwen English.

Russ Dean read the signed proclamation. Seven October Glories have been planted at the park prior to this event.

Tree Ordinance:

Kristen presented the current draft of the ordinance to the Conservation Commission members at their 6/08 meeting. They did not have a chance to discuss it, but hopefully they can review it and have a more detailed discussion at their 7/13/21 meeting. Once the ordinance has been updated, the Commission could then recommend to the Selectboard that it be considered for adoption.

Greg Jordan had sent a comment to Eileen about using the term 'caliper' versus 'DBH', and the committee members determined that it would be useful to have both terms defined in the ordinance. Another discussion took place about Jay's role in the Technical Review Committee process, and Jay reiterated that while he would be willing to help and advise when asked, he doesn't feel it should be his role to participate in all those procedures, stating that the Planning Board has their own regulations to follow.

Kristen does agree with Eileen that Jay's input on landscaping within the Town ROW and Town properties would be valuable, particularly since the Town crew and staff will be the ones ultimately responsible for maintaining and managing those trees.

Eileen brought up the educational component of the Committee's work. For example, perhaps we could work with Bob Glowacky to do a piece on the Tree Warden's role and responsibilities. Perhaps this could help generate support in funding all of Jay's work?

Jay indicated that it could be a double-edged sword, and he could get flooded with phone calls. Kristen wondered if it would be possible for Jay to track the number of responses he has with regard to this. Would that be an easy thing to do? Jay indicated that most of his interactions are over the phone, not through email.

The conversation circled back to the next steps with the ordinance. Eileen feels that we want to be able to tell the Selectboard that we've not only created this document, but we have gotten input from a lot of sources, and this is a product of a concerted effort from a lot of different groups.

Jay and Kristen talked again about the measurement of trees, and use of the word caliper. Jay indicated that most trees in a nursery are sold and priced according to their caliper. Gwen agreed to research this, and present the committee with a definition of caliper to put into the ordinance.

Gwen indicated that at some point we should have a discussion on penalties and enforcement. She has put brief paragraphs in the draft about those, but they currently serve as placeholders and the details will need to be ironed out. Eileen said the Portsmouth has legal counsel on staff who handle all that. Since we don't have a legal staff, we will have to sort this out. Kristen will look at Keene, NH (a similar size community) to see how they handle legal issues.

Jay Perkins departs at 9:00AM

Sally Ward arrives at 9:02

Kristen suggests that the committee members get comments back to Gwen, Sally, or her by the 18th of June, that would give us plenty of time to incorporate those changes in time to get them to the Conservation Commission for their July 13th meeting.

Eileen has additional thoughts beyond the ordinance, like having another tree 'walk and talk', and tree labeling. We should be giving some thought to the educational component of our work. How to get kids, and the community involved. She knows that Riverwoods has suggested that we could take a walk over there and look at their arboretum. Also, how do we make the tree list accessible to the public. Are there more user-friendly ways to get information to the public than through the Town website? Could we get a booth at the team music event on Swasey Parkway? Perhaps a scavenger hunt?

Kristen loves the idea about a video around “What is a Tree Warden” that we talked about earlier. She also thought we could do an outreach to make the community aware of the regulatory side of the ordinance, and also highlight lots of other things about trees in the community. She indicated that *facebook* is a great option for regular shares about that. Kristen feels that targeted event based things are great. Maybe we could come up with some sort of frequency for how often to have Community touch points and then develop a schedule and some concept of events. They have gone through this with the Raynes Farm, and having a list of events could help us think of more events!

Gwen suggested having an art day, with artists going out and around town painting trees. Shops like A Picture’s Worth has appropriate/tree related artwork that they could display in their windows.

Eileen brought up labels for trees, and said that Kevin Breen was looking into this. Sally said that either Colby or Bowdoin had done some tree work, and also had great labels. She has put out a request for more information from them on those. Gwen indicated that Riverwoods has labels on their trees that were made by VOSS. Kristen has worked with them, and they do almost all of their kiosk orders. They’re not local, but they are good.

Sally suggests telling the Conservation Commission members that we’re having comments by the 18th. If they can, and if they want to share any comments with us about the ordinance ahead of time, that would be great, but they should be prepared to discuss the ordinance at the next ConCom meeting.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will probably be live, at the Town office building. Hopefully we can have a Tree Committee representative there.

We will have to look into the possibility of having our meetings held online, or see if there could be a hybrid option.

Kristen will check about the legal aspect of the ordinance, and when it would be reviewed by Town Counsel.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 14th at 8:30AM.

Respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 6/13/2021

