

DRAFT MINUTES (7/14/2021)

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
July 14, 2021
Minutes

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Greg Bisson, Kristen Murphy, Jay Perkins

II. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes of June 09, 2021 were unanimously approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Flockhart reviewed the events of the Conservation Commission meeting held on July 13, 2021 which was attended by Tree Committee members Eileen Flockhart, Deb Twombly, and Gwen English. (Kristen Murphy attends the ConCom meetings as Exeter's Natural Resource Planner) Eileen Flockhart summarized the work done to date by the Tree Committee on the Tree Ordinance, and invited the Conservation Commission members to ask questions and make comments about the current draft. The draft was met with approval, with only a few questions from the Commission members.

Chair Andrew Koff indicated that he supported the \$300 penalty/fee mentioned in the draft, but was unsure how to proceed with that. That aspect will have to be worked on, and fine-tuned, with the help of Selectboard members, and perhaps Town's counsel.

Alyson Eberhardt shared her Draft copy containing her notes and comments that we will incorporate into the Ordinance.

The committee members discussed the significant tree diameter (20") and wondered if this is an appropriate figure for us to work with. It was decided that we would leave it at 20".

Eileen brought up Deb Twombly's comment to the ConCom members last night, expressing her concern that more trees are being cut than being planted. How do we address this, locally? While we recognize this imbalance, funding the planting of new trees is an issue.

Eileen mentioned the dead or dying tree on Water Street, in front of Oba Noodle Bar. It will need to be replaced.

Greg Bisson talked briefly about the Memorial Tree Fund that would be put in place by the Parks and Recreation department. A donation to that fund would cover the purchase of a tree, tree diapers, and a plaque. Some money would also go into the maintenance of that tree. It would be helpful to determine what locations in Town would be appropriate for the planting of new trees, and it would then be the Town's decision as to where a new tree would be planted.

A suggestion was made that it would be a good exercise for this group to discuss various scenarios we might face in the future, and determine if our guidelines make sense. Gwen suggested that perhaps we could have a flow chart outlining the sequence of steps one would follow for a variety of tree related issues. We could tweak the ordinance if necessary, based on this 'exercise'.

The next step is to make all the needed changes and updates on the draft, and return to the Conservation Commission for a review of the changes. Once approved by the Conservation Commission, the draft would go to the Selectboard, then to Legal counsel for review, and then to the Selectboard for three public readings that are necessary for approving an ordinance.

We need to work on the:

Ordinance

Standards for proper planting and maintenance

Specifications

Native Species/Trees and shrubs

Jay shared a flyer from UNH on 'Landscape Trees and their susceptibility to invasive species'. Documents like this would be helpful reference pieces for us, and for the public.

Eileen mentioned her contact with Riverwoods residents Tom and Mimi Adams who would like to work with us. Perhaps have a tour of Riverwoods to look at their trees.

Gwen indicated that the Unitarian Church is also interested in Exeter's trees, and the work of the Tree Committee. (Drs. Skip Berrien and Sally Oxnard are contacts at the Unitarian Church.)

Eileen mentioned that Sara Sankowich still wants to be part of the Tree Committee, though has been unable to attend meetings due to personal and work obligations. We are hopeful that Jen Martel will join us when time allows.

Eileen also stressed the point that the group needs to always be thinking about ways to engage and educate the public on the topic of trees, and that this is an important part of the Committee's work!

For the next meeting, we need to look at our lists, and work on finalizing:

1. Exhibit A- Approved Trees and Shrubs

2. Exhibit B-Invasive Trees and Plants

Kristen will work on the Invasive Tree list. Kevin, Jay, Greg Bisson and Greg Jordan will tackle the planting and maintenance standards.

The full committee will look at the species list once it is more or less complete.

September 14, 2021 is the next Conservation Commission meeting.

Kristen will need all the parts of the Ordinance by the 8th of September if we want to present it to the Conservation Commission on 9/14.

The next Tree Committee Meeting is scheduled for August 11th at 8:30AM at the Town Office building.

Kristen notes that she is working on the 2022 Alewife Festival and wonders if members of the Tree Committee would like to participate in this.

She will send out a Doodle Poll, probably in September, as she starts to iron out the dates.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10AM

Respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 7/16/2021