

DRAFT MINUTES (9/15/2021)

Town of Exeter, New Hampshire
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
September 15, 2021
Minutes

I. PRELIMINARIES:

Meeting began at 8:30AM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Eileen Flockhart (Chair)
Sara Sankowich, Sally Oxnard, Sally Ward, Gwen English

STAFF PRESENT:
Kristen Murphy (Natural Resource Planner)

II. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes of August 11, 2021 were approved as written.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Eileen gave a brief review of the Conservation Commission meeting (9/14) and announced that the Commission members voted unanimously to accept the draft of the Tree Ordinance and will move it forward to the Selectboard. (It will be reviewed by the Town Manager prior to that and then will be shared with the Selectboard members so they can weigh in on the process before it is reviewed by Town Counsel)

Kristen notes that the issue of the Tree Committee members, and the fact that the members are made up of a Board of volunteers, not appointed, and therefore with no terms, may be discussed by the SB. The SB *may* move to appoint the members. Eileen notes that she likes the idea of not having the committee be bureaucratically heavy. Kristen asked who will present the ordinance to the SB. No decisions made as yet.

A discussion ensued about the recommended tree list in the ordinance. Sara approves of the list, and indicated that having a larger list, including some hard-to-find trees is good. We can establish a partnership with local nurseries and encourage them to get some trees that are more “uncommon”. Sara also described an *i-Tree Tool* that can be a great device for determining the best location for planting certain types of trees.

Kristen feels that the section on tree planting techniques needs to be worked on.

Sally notes that the UNH Cooperative Extension would be a good resource for this. Kristen indicated that Tree City also has this information, and she will look into that for us. Sara shared with the group her UNITIL tri-fold brochure (it is on the UNITIL website). What we currently have is more technical than UNITIL's flyer. The group wonders if maybe we should have a version like that, AND the more technical version that we currently have. Kristen will work on this as well.

Eileen moved on to a discussion about tree labels. We should research this and find companies that make them. Eileen would like to talk with the Swasey Parkway trustees and propose that we label seven or eight of their trees. Sally Ward has done some research on labels and found that the labels produced by the company Forever Labels are quite expensive, but Jay *may* have some money in his budget to put toward them. Kristen wonders if Tree City might have signs available to buy. Sara indicated that we should also investigate plantsigns.com. When we're considering the type of label, we should also keep in mind the potential of vandalism. There was a discussion about including the Latin name and common name of the tree on the labels, and it was generally felt that having both would be good. The group felt that it would be good to label trees that we've planted thus far as part of our Tree Committee work. (The Lincoln Street School tree, Gilman Park October Glories, The new Liberty Elm in the triangle, and the Park Street Common trees)

Sara brought up Pokémon Go and how that could be a game to consider for kids and visitors in Exeter! Once you advance in a game you can recommend a Poke Stop, (a place of interest or a hotspot in our community), and this could be a good draw for places like Swasey Park!

Eileen reminded the group that there are two new principals in Town, one at Main Street School and another at the Cooperative Middle School. Perhaps we can chat with them about past and future tree campaigns. Eileen also reminded us that there are stores in Town that would love to work with us. Kristen has worked with Bob Johnson at CMS, and indicated that there is an ongoing wetland buffer project. She could propose a project that revolves around trees, and the functions of trees. (They've previously done a "Bud Blast" project)

Eileen would like to revive the connection with Riverwoods (She has spoken with Tom Adams from Riverwoods). They did have a numbered tree walk, and also have a wide assortment of trees planted on their campus. Gwen volunteered to look into the tree labeling there.

Eileen brought up applying again for Tree City USA. There is a 'Growth Award' for participating communities who have demonstrated higher levels of tree care and community engagement during the calendar year. There is a point system involved, and we have probably earned 50 points this year through the work done on our Ordinance, our various outreach efforts, ISA leadership, iTree

survey, and with the involvement of the tree professionals on our board. Kristen feels this is a great way to recognize all our efforts.

Kristen gave us an update on our previous discussion about the city of Dover's plan, and indicated that RPC can host a survey, but we don't have the proper GIS account yet to allow this to happen. This is largely a staff time issue and finding time to get our IT person to sit down with Rob Pruyne at RPC has been a challenge.

Peter Waltz's name also was mentioned, and the committee discussed his spring tree program. The Conservation Commission members help break the plants apart and get them bagged and labeled before delivering them to the school.

Eileen recapped our project list.

1. Check with the Swasey Parkway trustees about signage on 7-8 trees.
2. Possible signs on the October Glories at Gilman Park.
3. Talk to Jay about funding.
4. Look at the Growth Award List and prioritize what we want to work on, and look at what we've already accomplished.
5. Talk with Kevin about scheduling an autumn walk.
6. (Gwen will contact the Swasey Parkway trustees)

Next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2021 at 8:30AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:40AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English