

Draft Minutes October 13, 2021

Town of Exeter, New Hampshire  
**EXETER TREE COMMITTEE**

**I. PRELIMINARIES:**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Kristen Murphy, Jay Perkins

**II. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:35AM

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

Minutes of 9/15/21 were approved. Motion to accept moved by Eileen,  
seconded by Sally Ward.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

Jay and Eileen brought up the Salem Street project and expressed their satisfaction with the contractor who has been very careful with respect to the trees. The contractor has proceeded cautiously, and has been thoughtful with regard to tree trimming and root pruning.

Eileen and Kristen then reviewed the events of the Selectboard meeting at which the Draft Tree Ordinance was presented and discussed. The Selectboard members were in support of the Ordinance, although they did express concerns about the legality of issuing fines as outlined in the Ordinance, as does Town's Counsel who indicated that the Town does not have the authority to put fines on issues relating to trees within a ROW or easement across/over private property.

Jay indicated that this has historically been very confusing, and it is important for us to gain clarification on the legal authority issue. Jay also brought up the point that we have a lot of ordinances relating to Town Property, for example parking ordinances, so in some ways he is surprised by this. He wonders if there is a way to modify our Ordinance so it achieves our goals.

Eileen feels that our goal isn't to make money on fines, rather it is mostly to educate the public and discourage destruction of trees.

Town Counsel will assist us with this, and it was proposed that Jay and Kristen would try to set up a Zoom conference with the attorney this week.

If we can get things sorted out, we may be able to get everything together for the Selectboard meeting on 10/18, otherwise we will aim for their next meeting.

Kristen also addressed the topic of cemeteries, and said that the Selectboard members are in favor of removing them from the Ordinance. We do not want to have large trees in the cemeteries as they pose a risk to the head stones. Cemeteries will be managed the way they've been managed, and continue to be managed today.

Eileen questioned the committee members about reapplying for Tree City USA. They will need our hours for the volunteer hours component. She also asked the group if we should apply for the Tree City Growth Award, and wonders how often we would do this. "Every year or so, *or* once in a while?" Kristen thinks that we should go forward with the Growth Award, and the rest of the group concurs. Eileen will get the paperwork together for this project.

Eileen updated the group on Kevin's plan to hold a tree walk and talk at Phillips Exeter Academy. It is currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 27 at 4:00PM.

Kevin thought it would just be for committee members, but Eileen plans to check with Kevin to see if perhaps more people could be invited. She also thought it would be good to have the walk before the leaves have fallen!

The next topic of discussion was the plant signs. Eileen brought in some samples for the committee to examine. A discussion ensued about the pros and cons of having stakes with signs vs. hanging signs or signs screwed into the tree. Eileen had spoken with A.J. Dupere who does not like this last method, saying that even with the use of a spring, you need to adjust the signs as the tree grows. Unfortunately, signs on stakes can easily be vandalized, and signs hanging on the trees can be tricky to read.

Eileen has contacted Dave Short who is a Swasey Parkway trustee, and inquired about the trees that the trustees would like to have labeled. He indicated that the trees being considered would be a River Birch, Locust, Dogwood, Flame Maple. A Tree Committee member felt that we should be sure to label trees that are on our list of recommended trees. Sally Ward felt that we should label trees that we have planted. Eileen listed the Elm at the Lincoln Street School, the Maples at Gilman Park, and the Liberty Elm in the triangle by our Tree City flag. Though we have planted trees at Park Street Common, they already have markers and it might be too much to add signs to those.

Jay suggested that he could get pieces of granite and epoxy the sign directly onto the stone and put that next to the desired trees. He has access to old granite curbing and would be happy to cut those to a desired size. The group

felt that would be a great solution. We will need to ask the Swasey Parkway trustees if they would be comfortable with this for the seven to eight trees there that we'd like to label.

Jay went on to express his desire to look at potential candidates for Champion Trees in Town! There is one on the Morrissette property by SST, and a large Ash at the intersection of Powder Mill and Kimball Road. Once we find and measure a tree, or trees, someone at UNH will come and verify the measurements and then determine if it is a Champion Tree. It would be fun to get school children involved with this and have them measure the trees.

Kristen and Jay gave the committee an update on Unitil work on Holland Way. Unitil wants to take down some trees and were willing to walk the area with Kristen and Jay to review what needs to be done. Unitil was very receptive to Kristen and Jay's suggestions, and they have gotten the numbers well down from their original estimate. They will re-evaluate the area again in five years. Other trees are on private property and Unitil will need to get the property owner's permission before doing any cutting.

**Next meeting will be on November 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM**

Meeting adjourned at 9:40AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English