

DRAFT MINUTES: December 15, 2021

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

I. PRELLIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Eileen Flockhart (Chair), Deb Twombly, Dave Short, Gwen English
STAFF PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Kristen Murphy

II. CALL TO ORDER:

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

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Deb Twombly moved to accept the minutes of 11/10/21 as written. All in favor.
Minutes approved without any changes.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Flockhart reported that the 3rd year Tree City USA application was submitted along with the Growth Award (for 12 points). She also indicated that there seems to be more of a Town-wide awareness of trees, and the Tree Committee work, as a result of our efforts to date.

Deb Twombly expressed her concern that there seem to be more trees cut in Exeter than planted as replacement trees. There was a brief discussion that followed about trees that have been planted and subsequently not properly cared for. (As an example, the trees in front of Great Bay Kids Co. on Epping Road)

Dave Short suggested it would be good for the Town to establish a program where a 'pot' was created in which money could be put for the future planting of trees offsite in cases where it doesn't make sense, or isn't feasible, to have those trees planted on the development site.

Deb Twombly mentioned a vacant lot next to the Unitarian Church on Elm Street which could be converted into a pocket park. This led to a discussion about determining good ways to disseminate information about trees and Tree Committee projects. The Exeter facebook page, and Exeter TV could reach the most people. It would be good to establish a game plan for future public relation campaigns/topics. The Champion Trees could be a good lead-off project for us.

Regarding champion trees, Deb mentioned that trees were just measured in the cemetery by Kevin Martin, author of *Big Trees in New Hampshire*. Perhaps we could do something around 'biggest trees in Exeter' with a kick-off event, and invite Kevin

Martin to show folks how trees are identified and measured. It would be great to get kids involved in this. The **results** of the search would excite people.

Kristen felt that if we do a big search in Exeter, this could ultimately add to New Hampshire's champion tree list. Eileen wondered if connecting the age of a particular tree with historical events in Exeter would add an interesting element to this project.

To get this project off the ground, we can post the Champion Tree project on the facebook page. We can also send information to the local schools, and we can put posters in the library. Greg Bisson volunteered to contact someone at the High School, and we can work on establishing contact with someone at PEA...perhaps the sustainability coordinator, or someone in the science department. (Sydnee Goddard, for example.) Dave suggested that it might be good to show examples of Champion trees in Exeter. Areas to find champion trees in Exeter are Swasey Parkway, Gilman Park, and possibly the Academy campus. There is a giant Yellowwood by Main Street School, and one or two Stewartia trees (location not mentioned). By January, Eileen would like to document the Champion trees in Exeter to build the excitement for this project.

Deb mentioned Tom Wessels, a terrestrial ecologist, who has several youtube videos that would be interesting for the public to watch. (*Reading the Forested Landscape*, for example)

Eileen went on to briefly discuss the Lincoln Street School's pollinator garden project. They were granted \$1,100.00 to get this project underway and to buy the materials, tools, plants and bushes for this. Eileen mentioned that they need donated pollinator plants if residents are dividing up plants in their home gardens! Tree Committee member Kevin Breen donated, delivered and spread the loam for the Lincoln Street School gardens.

Next item for discussion was the iTree survey. Eileen thought that we might be able to get someone through UNH to do some of the work, and that Greg Jordan *might* be able to help us with this. Kristen indicated that we do have land use cover information for Exeter. She also updated us on progress made with our tree survey, and indicated that Andy Swanson has made provisions in the IT budget for this. (We will need a consultant) Rob Pruyne, the GIS manager at RPC, is also assisting Kristen in this process. The hope continues to be that we can get Survey123 up and running, so data can be entered as a participating individual is walking through Town, documenting street trees, empty tree wells, stumps, etc. with the focus on street trees. (As is currently being done in Dover, NH.). Greg Bisson reminded us that Andy Clawson, the new Parks and Recreation hire, has had vast experience in this field and we could get him to help us with this endeavor!

Greg also indicated that Dan Provost (an English teacher at EHS), will be his contact person at EHS for information about tree/environmental groups at the school. He and Dave Short also commented on the fact that Dan Provost's father, Dan, is "one of the best arborists around."

Kristen told the group that there is a town in NH that gives a baby Christmas tree to children entering grade school, being grown at a specific site, and when they are in their senior year in High School, they can cut the tree down for their Christmas tree.

Kristen also mentioned the Alewife Festival which will take place on May 14 at Founder's Park between 9:00 and 1:00, and thought it would be a great opportunity for the Tree Committee to set up a table with information to hand out to the public. Perhaps have the Memorial Tree Fund information, our flag/banner etc.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35AM.

NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 19TH, 2022, at 8:30AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English 12/16/2021