

## MINUTES (3/13/23)

Town of Exeter  
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE  
March 13.2023

### I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Sally Oxnard, Deb Twombly, Sally Ward, Gwen English

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Kristen Murphy

GUEST PRESENT: Steve Jones

### II. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 8:35 by Chair Flockhart

### III. OLD BUSINESS:

Motion to approve minutes (2/21/23) by Sally Oxnard. Seconded by Deb Twombly. Minutes accepted as written.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Flockhart introduced Dr. Steve Jones, resident of Exeter, who has donated three Elms to the Town of Exeter. These trees came from the Elm Research Institute located in Keene, NH, and have been planted in Gale Park. These trees, now approximately 20' tall, were 6' when installed in 2018.

Before engaging in a more in-depth conversation with Dr. Jones, Chair Flockhart updated the committee on our status with Tree City USA, indicating that Exeter did receive certification for another year. This marks year four with that status! It is not yet clear whether we will receive the Growth Award.

Chair Flockhart talked briefly about the School Tree Grant. When applying for this grant, schools need to provide various details, including information about who would be involved in the care of newly planted trees. Eileen isn't sure what the dollar amount of the grant would be, nor is she sure how big the trees would be, but thought that the grantee would be given a choice of trees to plant. She has reached out to the schools, as well as Rusty Lyster (Director of Facilities), to gauge their level of support for this grant. (And the planting of trees on school properties.)

Our next Facebook post needs to be about Arbor Day. We can sort out the details later, but at the moment we're leaning toward focusing on the topic of tree diapers for our April Facebook theme.

The next discussion revolved around the Lincoln Street School's (perennial) pollinator gardens. LSS would welcome donations of plants from local perennial gardens.

Kristen Murphy mentioned that a Pollinator Grant might be a possibility for the school. She believes that the dollar amount is roughly \$300 and would go toward native seeds. More information on Pollinator Pathways is available through Exeter's Conservation Commission.

Tree funding was discussed, and Kristen indicated that although the Conservation Commission does have funds, they only have approximately \$9,000 and those funds are spoken for. Unfortunately, with so little money at their disposal, there isn't much wiggle room to put money elsewhere. We were reminded that Jay Perkins has approached us to rally support for the hiring of an arborist for the Town.

Eileen will reach out to the new NH Tree City USA coordinator, Liz McKinley (Community Forester) to tell her that we're interested in doing an event...perhaps we can get trees for that. Kristen mentioned the Lincoln Street School Spring tree program with Peter Waltz.

Deb Twombly informed the group about the pocket park at the Unitarian Church on Elm Street in Exeter. They have a landscape designer working on this project. The planting of many trees is proposed, and the understory will be appropriately planned, and planted!

Attention turned to Steve Jones and his enthusiasm for trees, specifically elms. He spoke about the nursery in Keene that raises cultivars that are resistant to Dutch Elm disease. (There are six varieties, although none are *completely* resistant to the disease.) The nursery does 'cut deals' for municipalities and for large volume orders. The elms offered range from 4' to 18'. He has generously offered to purchase and donate a total of 15 elm trees for Exeter, without stipulating when they are to be purchased or where they are planted. He noted that "Everyone loves an elm...every critter that is!" They are known to be visited by and nibbled on by a wide variety of creatures, which we noted as being a positive feature! Steve has 30' elms in his yard that he planted in 2002...all are thriving. They grow quickly and establish themselves well in a wide variety of conditions, and their range is vast. They tolerate salts and sands well and are not finicky.

When the elms were planted in Gale Park, tree diapers were used. On average the tree diapers last about a year. Deb Trombly pointed out that you need to be careful about what diapers are purchased as there are some that are much better than others. Quality diapers cost about \$40.00 each and will break down after a few

years. (Diapers should be used on a newly planted tree for about 2 years.) The low variety are filled up initially with water, and then with absorb water during rains. A mere ¼" of rain can replenish them.

It's important that the diapers are put **under** the mulch so that they water the tree, not the mulch!

Discussion followed about possible locations for planting elms. Parks, such as Park Street Common or Swazey Park (We could ask Dave Short about this), Streets/Public spaces? Planted as replacement trees?

Steve Jones indicated that for a significant order of elms, a lead time of six months or more is typically needed. He will call and see what is available. In the meantime, we can reach out to Jay Perkins and Dave Short to get their feedback. If an order can be placed soon, we could plant in the fall. Steve indicated that all the elms come with a brass marker. He also offered to contribute tree watering diapers for the new elms.

Sally Oxnard and Sally Ward will do a walk around Swazey Parkway to see what trees are marked. Our new markers still need to be mounted on granite posts and positioned next to the appropriate trees.

Kristen provided a legislation update on HB2 which proposes that the State of NH lower the licensure qualifications for wetland and soil scientists and state foresters. (Among other professions). The hearing is scheduled for 2:00 this afternoon.

**Next meeting will be on APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM**

Respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 3/17/2023

**Additional Information:**

The Liberty Tree Society is a 501(c)(3) not for profit foundation located at:  
11 Kit Street in Keene, New Hampshire. 03431