

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
FINAL MINUTES for April 11, 2023

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Sally Ward, Gwen English, Niko Papakonstantis (Select Board representative)

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy, Jay Perkins

II. CALL TO ORDER:

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

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Flockhart announced that we have received the Tree City and Growth Award. Kristen Murphy volunteered to write something about this to post on the facebook page. Niko Papakonstantis requested a summary to present at an upcoming Select Board meeting, and Kristen will provide this as well.

With plans to feature tree diapers during the month of April, Eileen has taken a series of photos featuring the proper use of tree diapers. She hoped to present this as a 'story', but is having trouble with formatting. Kristen indicates that photos and links are challenging on facebook, but perhaps she can figure out a way to impart this information to the public. Eileen would like to focus on these two points:

1. Here are trees in Town that have succeeded.
2. "Thinking about planting a tree?" Here are hints for the use of tree diapers.

Eileen then updated the committee on happenings at Lincoln Street School and Main Street School. The Arbor Day Foundation has a School Tree Grant that needs to be submitted by April 10, 2023. They require student involvement, and affirmation that shovels etc. are available for this project. Trees also need to be planted by the end of the school year. Keith Schmitt has decided to submit an application for LSS, but MSS has decided to wait as they are unsure where to plant additional trees. When tree related events occur at LSS, we should have someone there to take photos and include this event in our presentation for the next Growth Award.

Lincoln Street School is looking forward to donations for their perennial gardens, and Eileen will contact Keith Schmitt to find out when he would like to receive plants. We can coordinate schedules with him. Eileen stated that it is still a challenge to keep these gardens watered in the summer. Kristen mentioned 'Dry Water' which

is frequently used out west. This is made with biodegradable pellets that absorb water. Perhaps this could work in the perennial gardens.

It was questioned whether LSS has a way to get water from the roof into a rain barrel. This watering dilemma may call for some creative solutions. Kristen suggested placing a piece of rain gutter (with holes punctured at the base) into the garden. When filled with water it would hydrate the soil gradually over time. Once native perennials are established, they should be OK.

Eileen told the committee that Steve Jones hasn't ordered the elms yet, so none will be available until 2026. In 2019 Steve wasn't sure we even wanted the elm trees, thus the reason for the delay. This will give us time to consider possible locations for the planting of these new elms!

Mike Harris (referred to Eileen by Kevin Breen) is the 4-H Program Manager in Rockingham County and he informed Eileen that there isn't much happening in the way of club or group activities in the Seacoast area. Unfortunately, there isn't an immediate group of kids available to get involved with our tree committee, but he appreciates knowing we exist.

The Alewife Festival is scheduled for Saturday, May 13 between 10:00AM-1:00PM at Founder's Park. NH Fish and Game will be present, along with the Conservation Commission, the Energy Committee, Sustainability Committee, Tree Committee, Healthy Lawn/Clean Water, and individuals to present on the Health of Great Bay, and others to talk about Native Plants. We are keeping it simple this year. Guests will be given postcards to be stamped at each table, then put into a container for a raffle. (The raffle prize will be a DPW rain barrel!). There will not be a food truck this year. The 'story walk' will be installed again on the fenceline. Niko requested a summary of this event that he can post, and mention at an upcoming Select Board meeting. We still have the leaf crayons and Kristen will see if we can get the wooden leaves from UNH cooperative extension.

During Earth Week there will be an opportunity for community members to participate in a Roadside Cleanup scheduled for April 17-23. Free bags, gloves and vests can be picked up at Public Works at 13 Newfields Road, Mon-Fri between 7:00AM-3:30PM. There will also be a table set up downtown for supplies on Saturday, May 13th.

Lincoln Street School and Peter Waltz are still partners in the annual tree program. Peter is welcoming volunteers to assist in getting each sapling packed in individual plastic bags with soil. This will happen sometime during April vacation, and then the trees will get delivered and distributed to students at LSS. Peter will do a hands-on demonstration, and likely has a pre-recorded video as well. There will be approximately 280 saplings. Eileen would like to get pictures of volunteers packing

up the trees at Peter's, and in a presentation would like to juxtapose these photos with pictures of the mature trees grown by LSS students (alumni). We could feature the trees located at the end of the LSS parking lot.

If Tree Committee members would like to help Peter Waltz in the preparation of these saplings, please let Kristen know.

We had a brief discussion about the replacement of deceased trees at Gilman Park, and wondered what has happened with the tree at Brickyard Pond that is falling over. Jay wasn't aware of this, but hopes that it can survive without being propped up and staked. He will take a look at it.

Jay reiterated that they won't remove a healthy tree, and indicated that he has received many calls from landowners following the storms that we've seen out west. The weather reports and news reports get people worked up about tree safety!

Kristen has been communicating with Greg Jordan, Rockingham County's Forestry Field Specialist, and discussing the use of *itree* to track trees, tree health and conduct tree canopy analysis. There may be a way to use *itree* in Exeter and narrow down the survey to Town ROW's.

Steve Jones arrived at approximately 9:10AM.

He reiterated Eileen's earlier statement that he wasn't sure if we wanted trees, so none were ordered. His offer still stands though, to purchase 15 elms, and we can decide whether to purchase 15 at one time, or perhaps do smaller orders of 5 trees each. The committee members are leaning toward ordering 5 initially, then two subsequent orders of 5 trees each. It will be three years before the first delivery. 4'-6' trees currently cost approximately \$180.00. He would prefer to have someone pick the trees up in Keene, and said that a large pick-up truck would suffice. There is a possibility that Jay Perkins or Greg Bisson could provide a vehicle to transport these from Keene to Exeter.

Locations for planting the elms is still undetermined, but the north end of Swasey Parkway may be an option.

In the meantime, we should also be thinking of other types of trees to plant!

We are still working on granite markers for our tree labels, at the schools. Eileen is communicating with Rusty Lyster about this. Sally is marking where our labels are currently placed.

For upcoming themes, it is decided that May is Peter Waltz's month, and we will move Greg Jordan to June.

Minutes from March 13, 2023, were approved without any changes.

Next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 8:30AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on April 14, 2023

