

DRAFT MINUTES (7/11/2023)

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
Minutes 7/11/2023

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Steve Jones, Sally Oxnard, Niko Papakonstantis (Selectboard rep), Deb Twombly, Sally Ward
Gwen English

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 8:40 by Chair Flockhart

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from June 13, 2023 were approved with two minor changes.
Motion to approve by Steve Jones, seconded by Deb Twombly.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Flockhart reported that Kristen Murphy put up an information piece on tree diapers on facebook, but commented that it doesn't stay up long. (Unless we click on it and share the piece, or comment on it.) What can we do to resolve this? We could talk to the Conservation Commission and tell them that we want to get information out to the public without burdening them with the process.

Niko said that we can post information and get the Town of Exeter to share it. He also suggested that we communicate with Bob Glowacky and have him include information in his bi-weekly newsletter which gets a lot of hits.

Niko will also look into getting the possibility of the Tree Committee getting its own site so we don't have to run everything through ConCom.

Eileen made the point that we need to stress NOT building mulch volcanoes. Also, the trees in Gilman Park are getting girdled by weed whackers or mowers. Deb said it could also be caused by rabbits or raccoons who also eat bark on young trees. She suggested that we could get tree protectors which are usually made of plastic or rubber, and are not expensive.

For our August topic of focus, we could add the subject of mulch and tree protectors. For our September topic of focus, we could focus on what was talked about during the upcoming Selectboard meeting.

Niko assured us that we can take all the time we need at the July 24th meeting to update the Selectboard members on Tree Committee activities. It is felt that 20 minutes will suffice. He will also attempt to put us at the top of their agenda. We need to have everything submitted for the SB packet by the 20th of July.

Discussion for the Selectboard meeting:

Eileen feels that we can take turns presenting information to the Selectboard. In our presentation we need to include the following:

1. Packet with photos and handouts
2. Chart with trees and tree labels
3. Tree City/Growth Awards
4. Community events (Include photos)
5. Talk about our goals and our achievements.

Goals: Protection for trees. Adding to the existing tree canopy. Etc.

Achievements: Creation of the ordinance. Establishment of the Tree Committee. Inventory (Though this was created prior to the Tree Committee's existence) Street Tree program. Relationship with Unitil. Note that early on, the Selectboard suggested that our first goal could be to establish Exeter as a Tree City, which we have done!

6. Explain how trees get funded and planted. (Grants. Parks and Recreation funds. Jay Perkins's budget with DPW. Steve Jones's contribution.)
It was brought up that funding sources should be added to Steve's list of trees and their locations throughout Exeter. i.e Park Street Common trees were paid for through fund raising. The Liberty Elm was a replacement for the original tree that did not survive. Sweet Gums were from school funds and discounts from Dave Short. Tulip Tree and Sugar Maple at LSS were from the Tree Canopy at Schools Grant. Some trees are funded through memorial donations. Eileen will note at the meeting that we are getting great cooperation with the Town's DPW workers and from Greg Bisson with Parks and Recreation (Tree diapers and mulch etc.)

Kristen noted that Unitil contributed the trees that are newly planted on Holland Way, and that this was a good example of cooperation between Unitil and Jay Perkins who is a great ambassador of and advocate for the Town and the Tree Committee.

7. Eileen thinks it would be good to ask the SB what their vision is for the Town.
 - Could we hire an arborist for the Town?
 - What are their thoughts about green strips on Portsmouth Avenue?
 - Assistance with tree selection?
8. While we are talking about accomplishments, we should have an accompanying power point presentation of what we have accomplished, though we don't need to read the details of this to the Selectboard at the meeting.
9. Sally Ward feels we should add to this our request for a stable source of funding. Kristen noted that through IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) there is a forestry component for funds. It does involve a large sum of money (\$25,000) which is a lot of money for a volunteer board to manage.
10. Deb Twombly will discuss the Tree Canopy Analysis/Tree Equity Score map for Exeter and compare the details with other communities, such as Dover, Durham and Rochester.

Sally Oxnard indicated that we need to get together this week to work on a Power Point presentation with Kristen. Niko reminded us that we just need to submit one packet to the Selectboard members by the 20th. They will make sure that all members have a copy available to them.

1st page can outline all that we're covering at the meeting.

Sally Ward can talk about all the trees that we've planted and labeled.

Eileen wants to make sure we have pictures of the tree plantings, and include those that have images of the backhoes .

Kristen can speak to the cooperation we have with Unitil and others.

Eileen will have agenda ready to send out.

There was a brief follow-up discussion about the trees that died at Gilman Park. What happened there, and what can we do to make sure it doesn't happen again. They likely suffered from being in soil that was too wet. It was noted that they have not been mulched, which allows closer contact between mowers, weed whackers, and resulting injuries to the tree's bark.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35

Next Meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English

