

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
MINUTES 10/10/2023

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

II. CALL TO ORDER:

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

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from September 12, 2023 were approved with one change to the text.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Recap of Selectboard Meeting:

Eileen noted that the Selectboard members were very supportive and enthusiastic following the Tree Committee's presentation. Dan Chartrand suggested that we look beyond next year's or the following year's budget and for us to 'think bigger'. We need a more broad-reaching plan for the future.

We (The Tree Committee) have proposed a budget containing \$5,000 for eight trees, and \$10,000 for a study (inventory) of existing trees.

Deb Twombly noted that there was talk of having an arborist or a part-time arborist to help out. (The question did arise about what we would want an arborist to be responsible for.)

Money went through for the purchase of a watering truck and a chipper. (It will be in this year's DPW budget. It still needs to go through the budget process before the Selectboard members vote. The final step is the Town meeting/public vote in March.

It was mentioned that perhaps next year we could go for \$20,000.

Niko suggested we ask for additional funds for the purchase of trees, and that we consider drafting a Master Plan. He also wondered if we could get volunteer help for some projects.

Sally Ward informed the committee that seven very large trees were taken down near her home and wondered if we could propose that we have a permitting requirement for the cutting of trees on private property. Perhaps the permit could

be made necessary for cutting down trees that are over a certain size/dbh.

Steve was uncomfortable with this, and suggested that we could offer incentives for replanting or planting anew, thus turning this into a positive rather than a punitive program. Sally wondered what could be done instead of taking down trees. Steve volunteered that an arborist could be the arbiter, and this negotiation could be an educational opportunity!

Eileen suggested that we could approach Greg Jordan and/or Kevin Breen to see if we can arrange a walkabout with them and seek their guidance as to where we need trees in Town, and have them note where there are big holes in our canopy. Sally Oxnard said they should be thinking about high visibility places. Eileen suggested Lindenshire. Sally Ward wondered where the 'hot spots' are in Town. Steve reminded us that we have a short term need to find a place to plant two elms, and a long term need for where we'll plant trees in the future. Perhaps we could work with private landowners.

It was noted that Unitil also gives out trees and we should remember this. Steve wanted to extend his gratitude to the folks at DPW and Parks and Recreation for all they have done to help with the planting of the new elm trees. (Planting, mulching, protective shields etc.)

Eileen brought up the two unplanted elms again and wanted thoughts about possible planting locations. Steve encountered a resident recently who suggested planting a tree on the cul-de-sac on Glenerin Lane. Eileen will contact Jay Perkins to see if that would be a safe location, particularly in the winter where plowing snow and snow storage could be a concern.

Steve would like to investigate "punching holes in sidewalks" for planting trees in Town! In response, Sally said that it sounds like we'd like more trees in Town. We need to consult with Jay Perkins about where trees have come down in Exeter that need to be replaced. Perhaps we could put another tree in Swasey.

Eileen would like each of us to submit our volunteering information, including hours, dollar contributions etc. so she can submit that to Tree City USA. We may be able to go for a Growth Award again this year. Included in that could be:

1. Selectboard proposal
2. Planting of trees
3. Slide show presentation
4. Alewife festival
5. Lincoln Street tree planting project.

Going back to the discussion of the tree inventory, it was noted that the inventory

would involve recruiting neighbors within the community to do an inventory of the trees on their street. This would also help to spread the word about the existence of the Tree Committee.

Niko noted that there are efforts afoot to improve communication, and that Bob Glowacky will be working on a monthly newsletter/report of things going on in Town. Deb wondered if we could jump onto the DPW's 'page'. Eileen noted that we have a lot of resources at our disposal that could help us.

Kristen Murphy has posted a notice on the Conservation Commission page about the planting of trees.

Steve proposed that we launch efforts to raise awareness about the Tree Committee, and trees, by or on February 1, 2024. We should let the public know about all the DPW's efforts and their work done with regard to our trees.

Eileen suggested that we should be considering the planting of conifers, and that it would be good to plant those as well as deciduous trees.

Sally Oxnard and/or Niko will speak with someone at the Exeter Newsletter about the Tree Committee's efforts. We can offer them photos, and possibly text for an article.

It was suggested that we could have a community education table in place for Town meeting day.

Deb reported that she had attended an Eastern Old-Growth Tree conference in Moultonborough that was hosted by the UNH Cooperative Extension. Speakers included several notable individuals including Bill McKibben and Suzanne Simard, author of *Finding the Mother Tree*.

Between now and the next meeting we should put thought into where to plant eight trees. We'll also reach out to Kristen Murphy for more information about the App for the tree inventory.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40AM

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR: November 14, 2023 at 8:30AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 10/13/2023