

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES 1/09/2024

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 8:40AM

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from 11/14/23 were approved with one minor change. Sally Ward's name was added in *IV. New Business* on page one. Sally Oxnard moved to approve the minutes with this change, Deb Twombly seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Kristen Murphy volunteered to check the new tree on Glenerin Lane.

The 23 Water Street property donation was discussed, and Niko indicated that there is no official plan, as yet, on the design of what will eventually be a park there, and he made these points:

- *It will need to go on the CIP
- *It will be professionally done
- *It will be done in phases
- *1st step is to make it SAFE (and with secure fencing)
- *The Selectboard will put together a committee
- *Lots of volunteer time and equipment will be donated
- *Will run by Primex which is the Town's insurance company

Steve Jones was not yet present, but Eileen told the committee that each new elm tree is documented and registered, and comes with a 'dog tag' which will eventually be placed on or near each new tree. Steve will fill us in on the details.

Eileen wants the committee members to be thinking about what tree species we would like to highlight this year. We could review the list that Deb sent to us following a class she attended on Recommended Urban Trees. The list includes

evergreens and notes the pluses and minuses of those. Kristen noted that our ordinance includes a list of trees as well.

Eileen reminded us that we may be in the position of purchasing eight trees this year. What do we want to buy? Where do we want to plant them? In parks? Between the road and sidewalks? Lincoln Street? Portsmouth Avenue? The High School? (Perhaps a large oak in front of the EHS building). We could look at 3-4 replacement trees and 3-4 trees in new locations.

Kristen noted that we can identify spots where trees need to be replaced, or added, and can note the site conditions (such as powerlines, soil type, exposure to road salt, whether it is a wet or dry area, and whether it is in the shade or is sunny) then we can use professional help to determine what tree(s) will thrive in those conditions. She also reminded us that we need age diversity, particularly in areas where there are a lot of old trees. We also need to pre-plan for Ash trees that may begin to die off.

Steve Jones arrived at approximately 9:00AM

Eileen would like to have Bob Glowacky come and film...highlighting historical stories about trees. She feels that Bob is a better route for us to take than the Newsletter. He will hopefully come to our February meeting.

Steve pointed out that if we are willing to write an article and submit that, along with a photograph, to the Newsletter, that would be worthwhile. He would be willing to take on this task.

The committee would like to set up a table at the March 12 election to provide visibility about the Tree Committee. Who would be willing to sit there? What would we like to hand out? What talking points should we have? Steve pointed out that our Town moderator takes the alleyway very seriously and may not allow us to be in the solarium. Niko will discuss this with her, and they can talk about our budgeting needs and whether our funding is a line item or whether our ask for funds is coming out of the general budget.

Eileen gave the group an update on Lincoln Street's Green Team and informed us that they have applied for another Schoolyard Habitat Grant through NH Fish and Game. The Green team would like to establish a butterfly garden and hope to receive \$1,600 to set this up in back of the school. The grant has already been written. Kristen said it might be helpful for us to write a letter of support for that grant. A motion was made by Sally Oxnard and was seconded by Steve. All voted in favor of this motion. Kristen will help to draft this letter.

The discussion went back to the Elm tree tags which have written on them the following information: American Herbie Elm. Propogated in 2018. Elm Research Institute, 11 Kit Street, Keene, New Hampshire.

We discussed whether to glue/epoxy these tags to granite posts, affix them with wire or attach them to the trees with aluminum nails and stainless steel springs. (It would be necessary to wait for at least two years before affixing anything to the trees since the trees are still small).

It is likely that the folks at DPW could help us again with the granite posts, and the task of attaching the tags to those. The granite posts should be placed within the mulched areas around the trees. We should keep everything consistent with the other trees that we've planted, and the markers that have already been put into place. Steve and Kristen have volunteered to speak with Jay Perkins at the DPW about all this.

Eileen brought up the draft survey that we'd like to send out to community members to solicit thoughts on potential planting sites for new trees. Once we get some feedback, we can have the folks at DPW review the information and access these sites for potential problems. We need to address the stewardship issue for these newly planted trees. (For example, watering!) The draft survey will hopefully help us build a volunteer base.

Sally asked about Dashboard (such as Dover's Dashboard) and Kristen replied that the funding is on the ballot for March. Kristen does have a draft RFP.

Steve asked about a calendar for all these topics, and whether we have an idea for timing. For example, do we want to plant in September? (This may be a 'Jay question') Also, do we want to have the survey completed by the end of July? It was noted that we have a budget that we need to use, or we will lose it! Kristen said that once we get all this sorted out, it will help us to establish a yearly process. Kristen's tasks: *Survey that she is putting together.

*Larger Urban Tree project is an entirely different deal.

Steve wondered about the lag time between ordering trees and getting them. Kristen responded that most of the trees come from Stratham and are typically immediately available. She also reminded us that there are grants available. Niko assured the group that as long as the budget committee knows that we are in the process of planting, we're OK.

Niko indicated that in late summer the Selectboard's schedule is a bit lighter, and things are slower. They can invite us back to discuss the status of tree planting, and tree planting plans.

Kristen is familiar with the ECO Club at the High School, overseen by Mr. John Brough. They typically meet at 3:30 on Thursdays. She will pass along information to us about this group, and Sally and Steve have volunteered to attend a meeting, or meeting(s).

Sally has generously offered to donate two trees.

Greg Bisson sent an email to Eileen updating her on the trees at Gilman Park which will be replaced in the spring. He also informed her that four trees at Planet Playground have to be removed for safety reasons and will be replaced when the playground is renovated. One of the four trees is an Ash with signs of Emerald Ash Borer activity, the other three trees are bull pines that are showing signs of rot and woodpecker activity. These conclusions were confirmed by Curtis Tree Care.

Before the meeting ended, Kristen said that she can share with the group a more detailed spread sheet that includes tree species, growth habits, and site condition needs.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45AM

Next Meeting: February 13, 2024 at 8:30AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 1/13/2024