

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES FOR 2/13/2024

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Kevin Breen, Gwen English, Sally Oxnard, David Short, Sally Ward

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Bob Glowacky, Kristen Murphy

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 8:40AM

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from 1/09/2024 were approved without any changes. Motion to approve made by Sally Oxnard, seconded by Kevin Breen. All were in favor of approval.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Eileen introduced Bob Glowacky and thanked him for joining the meeting. She asked him how we can “get a bigger bang for our buck” using Exeter TV’s talented staff. Bob suggested project-based videos, featuring topics such as Elm trees being planted around Town, and educational information that we’d like to get out to the public. Eileen wondered if we could re-run old videos.

Bob indicated that we could use YouTube and Facebook (ConCom’s Facebook page) because people these days generally don’t watch things that are broadcast on TV. Eileen thought a good headline for a topic would be “So, you’re thinking about planting a tree!?” Then go through the tree planting steps.

Bob suggested having a regular schedule of tree related topics that we could plan to air throughout the year. This schedule could be announced through a video press release, or in the Exeter News-Letter that goes out to approximately 500 people who have signed up to receive it.

We could have seasonal topics (such as the alewife festival), and ‘how-to guides’.

The question arose about whether there are QR codes on our trees, and if so, where does the QR code take people. Greg responded that the codes give specific information about each particular tree, they don’t reference the Tree Committee.

Bob suggested that we reach out to schools, and Eileen informed him that she has communicated with them about Earth Day activities and then she reminded the committee about our 'Champion Trees' project. Bob responded that something like this event could go into the News-Letter as a 'teaser', and with a photo, it could refer back to the website/ConCom facebook page.

Eileen felt that we need to develop a topic list and form a schedule for featuring these topics.

Dave Short thinks we need content. He feels it is very important to have topics featuring 'after care' for newly planted trees. We could also consider insect identification, non-chemical means for controlling pests, and good mulching practices. (Sending the message that 'mulch volcanoes stunt tree growth, and are a huge detriment to the health of trees.). He wondered if we could do some before and after comparisons of mulching, because once the mulch has been pulled away from the trunks of trees, the trees will thrive!

Bob advised us that we'd need to get permission to go onto private property if we want to take photos and/or videos.

Eileen felt that in educating businesses and homeowners, we'd want to present advice in a positive, not punitive way!

Dave thought we could reach out to new locations where trees have been over mulched. Bob wondered if we have ever hosted an educational event with stakeholders to educate them about mulching. Eileen offered that in addition to a mulching session, we could also talk about pruning. Dave thought that as part of a program on aftercare, we could invite an arborist to speak to us, and the public. Some possible Tree Tip topics could be: mulching, pruning, woolly adelgids on hemlocks, and ownership questions regarding trees on property lines.

Bob wondered what else we could focus on. Perhaps trees as they relate to carbon emissions? Eileen added wildlife habitat. She questioned what else trees provide, and thought we should assess the value of trees! We should also consider talking about the alternatives to taking trees down.

Sally Oxnard mentioned forest management, and referred to the selective cutting at Riverwoods. We could explain the purpose behind this project and provide education that will be helpful. Kevin said that there is a trail that goes around this Riverwoods project so you can see the result of the cutting.

Dave offered that it would be a good idea to do a five year visual log of this cut. We could involve Greg Jordan (who worked with Riverwoods on this project) and Patty Davidson who is the new horticulturalist at Riverwoods.

Kristen noted that we could also go to the Town forest and look at the cut area there. That cut was finished in 2017.

Eileen said we could look at the list of topics and start prioritizing them. Sally Oxnard thought that before Arbor Day we could take advantage of publicizing these topics.

Dave indicated that homeowners don't understand proper planting of trees. It would be beneficial to have them go to the nursery and learn firsthand about this process. Trees frequently come to the nursery with root balls that need to be uncovered to the point where one can see the root flare. This is important as trees might otherwise be planted too deep.

Bob Glowacky left at 9:15AM

Eileen reported that the baby trees seem to have survived the recent flood on Swasey Parkway.

Eileen has received permission from the Selectboard to have a table at the upcoming elections. The purpose of having a table is to inform the public about the existence and role of the Tree Committee. The Green Team from LSS may have a representative available to be at the table. (Voting is March 12)

Sally Oxnard said that we could have handouts, like the "anti-volcano" information. Dave thought it would be good to have visuals-photo of what it should and shouldn't look like.

Kevin said that the UNH Cooperative Extension has great fact sheets. He's happy to do a search for some that would be appropriate for us.

It was felt that on March 12th, it would be good to have a table 'manned' from noon to 6:00PM. Sally Oxnard can be there from 4:00-6:00, Eileen can be there from noon to 2:00. Will work on getting coverage from 2:00 to 4:00. Perhaps Steve could be available for that time slot.

Eileen will try to come up with a flag for the table.

Kristen can do printing of materials if needed.

Eileen brought up the launching of the tree planting survey, and Kristen, having prepared the survey, reviewed it with the group. We should have the survey at the table on March 12th.

After the election 1. The RFP for the Tree Database will be sent out

2. We have a plan for planting of trees.

Dave feels it doesn't really matter when we plant trees, because regardless of when we plant, trees still have to be kept watered. We need to do a lot of periodic heavy watering then "let it go."

(Though there are factors to consider with the planting of trees, including the type of shelter around a planting site, the soil type, and the type of tree being planted.)

Sally Oxnard brought up the idea of a community 'walk-through pruning' exercise, feeling that this would be a very helpful project. Dave agrees that this would tie in well with the 'after care of trees' theme. We should coordinate this pruning event with Bob Glowacky.

Sally Oxnard hasn't yet communicated with the Environmental Club at the High School, but she will, and will also talk with the principal about the trees on the High School site. Dave felt that the High School would be a good example of a location where trees haven't thrived. The High School might be a good place to start with the planting and tree care topic.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45AM

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 2/14/2024