

Town of Exeter

TREE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES FOR JUNE 10, 2025

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Kirk Scamman

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:35AM

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from May 13, 2025, approved. Motion to approve by Sally Ward, seconded by Steve Jones. *It was noted by Sally Ward that a Serviceberry is being held at Stratham Circle Nursery for a future planting.*

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Sara Sankowich and Eileen Flockhart introduced our guest, Chris Moultroup. Chris is a member of the UNITIL team and works as their Forestry Supervisor and assists with their Vegetation Management program, identifying/evaluating compatible and incompatible vegetation and determining action thresholds.

Sara and Chris work with Laura Brodeur on utility vegetation management and plantings. (Ms. Brodeur was not in attendance at this meeting)

Sally Ward has created and maintained a list of planted trees and has noted on that list the volunteers who will be monitoring them. She asked us to review page one of the list, and (on page 2) sign up to check trees that currently are not being regularly observed.

Eileen met with Rusty Lyster and examined the site where the Sweetgum tree was removed. Rusty pulled up the labeled granite post and it will be installed when the replacement tree has been planted. There are three, 3" caliper Sweetgums

available at Stratham Circle Nursery. Kirk has been apprised of this and has already worked with Dig Safe to verify that the new site is safe for planting.

The tree planting at Raynes Farm, by the bench, will occur this fall after the work is finished on the barn. Kirk and Sally (Ward) will work on this together.

Sally Ward distributed a list that she, Steve and Gwen worked on while examining the trees at Swasey Parkway and Town House Common. She noted that we were not entirely confident in the accuracy of the phone apps used to determine the species of each tree observed. Gwen volunteered to contact and work with Dave Short on this before we move forward and order labels. She asked about labeling the Hydrangea Panicle and the group said yes. Kirk indicated that he can cut the granite posts to the desired length, and that while putting them 2' into the ground is ideal, there will be an issue with tree roots. He will do his best to install them without damaging the roots. In summary, there will be a total of 20 labels and 18 new posts.

Kirk proceeded to summarize the work done with UNITIL involving trees on Tremont Street which were determined to be on private property. The homeowner does not want these trees removed. NG Gilbert is aware of this, and they will communicate with the homeowner and work to resolve the issue. There is a large tree (>20dbh) on Front Street that *may* have to be removed. UNITIL will need to come to the Tree Committee for approval if it is determined that this tree could negatively impact service lines. (And would need to be cut)

Sara shared with the group that there are communities that have canopy rules and watershed regulations. Sally Oxnard asked if there are regulations in Exeter that regulate the cutting of trees when new developments are built. Gwen responded, noting that developers are required to plot on their site plans trees >20dbh that are within the areas to be cleared for construction. The Planning Board encourages developers to save as many of the large trees as possible but cannot require developers to do so. The Planning Board also stresses the importance of re-planting trees and vegetation on the development site.

Eileen is keeping connections open with the Green Team at Lincoln Street School but is not having as much success with the Middle School.

She also reviewed the events at this year's Alewife Festival and thanked everyone for their participation. The book sharing was well received, and she encouraged us to save any tree related books we might have so that they can be shared at next year's festival.

Eileen and Kristen have been working on the website, and it is still a work in progress. They have had great cooperation with Exeter TV.

The tree survey workshops/training sessions are coming up soon and it was discovered that the dates on the flyers need to be corrected. One date is June 14 and the next is either June 25th or June 23rd. A good location for the session would be at Town House Common. This will all be determined by Kristen!

Greg Bisson updated us on the status of Planet Playground. Four trees have been planted there (2 Elms on the side, and 2 (3") caliper Cherry trees. He was asked whether the elms were Herbie Elms, and then Steve gave a brief history of those. (The Herbie Elm in Yarmouth, Maine was naturally resistant to the elm disease and was successfully cloned.)

The group went on to discuss future plantings and Sally Oxnard noted that the outer reaches of Front Street look pitiful. Steve noted that the public ROW is not large which is an issue. The group feels that we need to look at all entranceways to Town and determine where we need to plant trees. Gwen volunteered to ask Dave Short about tree species that won't wreak havoc with sidewalks and can tolerate narrow unpaved strips of land. Eileen will go to the Cross Fit studio and/or the Jiu Jitsu gym on Portsmouth Avenue to ask about planting a tree, or trees, in that area. (Close to Las Olas and Exeter Pediatric Dentistry etc. Sally will approach the dentists) She also suggested that perhaps we should invite Dave Sharples to a future meeting to talk about the upcoming construction in the areas by Rockingham Feed, Union Street, Lincoln Street, and Kossuth Street. Where could plantings occur there?! Eileen also noted that we have the new Tree City flag, but she still doesn't know where the little plaques are. Niko will see if he can find them.

Meeting concluded at 9:40AM

NEXT MEETING: JULY 8 at 8:30 in the WHEELWRIGHT ROOM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on June 11, 2025

