

Town of Exeter

**TREE COMMITTEE**

*DRAFT* MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

**I. PRELIMINARIES:**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Deb Twombly, Sally Oxnard, Sally Ward, Sara Sankowich, Steve Jones, Gwen English

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Kirk Scamman, Greg Bisson, Jay Perkins

**II. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:30AM (Gwen arrived at 8:40)

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

Minutes from August 12, 2025 were approved without changes

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

Meeting commenced with a discussion about the tree work proposed by UNITIL for areas including Park Street, Epping Road, Water Street, Newfields Road, Front Street, Linden Street, Lary Lane, Court Street and Bell Avenue. (Refer to list included. *Tree Work for E19X3*)

Jay asked if the stumps can get ground, Sara responded that yes, if requested. Kirk noted that the water tank was used one day and that it worked well, but due to the Level 4 watering ban, they have not had it out again. Sara wondered if there is a way to fill the tank using rain water. There was a brief discussion about UNITIL's method for marking trees for pruning and for removal. (See 8/12 minutes). Sara noted that the pink and black ribbons indicate super sensitive trees. She will provide us with more detailed information. In the past, UNITIL moved cut trees to a location to get milled, but that has gotten more challenging.

Kirk feels that the 30" Oak in Swasey Parkway should be saved and we'll recommend that the Trustees for Swasey Parkway conduct a plant health care assessment on the tree and treat the tree accordingly. Kristen will draft a letter for the TSP expressing those sentiments. The 24-30" Oak on Park Street should receive similar treatment; Oak to be saved and a health care assessment conducted. Due to the current

drought and established water ban, Eileen and the committee members feel that we should hold off on planting this fall, and re-evaluate planting conditions in the spring of 2026. (*Greg Bisson left at 9:05*) Deb felt that we can safely plant as late as November, but we won't transplant anything now.

Eileen wanted to discuss tree labels, and indicated that Greg Bisson will order the tags. Kirk and crew at DPW will get the granite ready.

The Serviceberry selected for planting at the Raynes Barn will be held until conditions for planting improve.

Eileen has spoken with Mark Damsell about a celebration for the White Birch at Swasey Parkway, and learned that Mark has old pictures of the Birch. She wonders if we can gather more pictures from the public to put on facebook and perhaps on our website. Kristen feels that we should do both, and that pictures should be submitted to her.

Eileen would like to meet with Brian Sands, the new Director of Facilities for SAU 16 and let him know that our committee exists and that we would like to be partners with him going forward on tree planting projects on school properties.

In a discussion about the Exeter Tree Inventory, Kristen informed us that work is ongoing on this project and that we have a contract with the Rockingham Planning Commission who has built the program for us. Exeter has a new GIS coordinator, Linda Burbank, who will be assisting us, and working on ironing out some of the glitches. Kristen brought up the current maps on the overhead screen and explained the reasons for different colorings. All of this is currently held at RPC and they are working on transferring it to Exeter's systems. Ultimately it will include existing and new data, and will be used to identify planting sites and will assist us/DPW with the maintenance of our trees. Kristen also noted that the 'empty sites' on the maps may have been determined by Daniel not to be on Town property. Data collection is on hold for the moment. There are some accuracy issues, and it is a little clunky with the tablets that DPW uses. Eileen feels that this GIS update would be good to have as part of our upcoming presentation to the Selectboard. (*Sally Ward left at 9:35*).

To determine a date for a Tree Committee presentation to the Selectboard, Kristen will communicate with Niko and see what is on the Selectboard's upcoming agendas.

Kristen informed the committee about a \$25,000 Climate Impact grant potential with the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) whose purpose is to address climate related heat impact mitigation. Urban heat models would be used to gather information on Exeter, and Kristen feels that Front Street would be a good focus

area. (Portsmouth Avenue would also be a good target area, but due to future work proposed there, that area will be put on hold for the time being.). Some of the key details Kristen feels should be included in the grant are: Explain that funds are needed for trees, funds needed for tree diapers, funds for signage explaining the benefit of trees. She also feels that we could highlight events to be held throughout the planting process. (The Tree Committee would be the public education arm of this grant.) Eileen noted that we could possibly pull in the Green Team at LSS for this! Deb wondered if we could look at planting trees in the parking lot behind the Town Office, and while everyone agrees that the parking lot would be a great place for plantings, Kristen doesn't want to include 'complicated sites' like this in the grant. The grant is due at the end of October.

Sara informed the committee that UNITIL has a list of trees that can go under power lines. (Trees that would not exceed 20' in height.). Trees cannot exceed 10' below the energized lines-UNITIL's line is the top line, and under that are the fiber optic lines etc. Trees need to be 3' below neutral lines.

*(Steve Jones left at 9:45 after informing the group that he will not be here on 10/14)*

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:50AM

**Next meeting will be on October 14, 2025 at 8:30AM**

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 9/14/2025