

Town of Exeter

TREE COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2025

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristen Murphy,

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Eileen Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:30AM

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Sally Oxnard motioned to approve the minutes from October 14, 2025, and Steve Jones seconded the motion. Minutes approved with no changes.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Eileen started off the meeting with a discussion about Arbor Day events and noted that the current drought has prevented us from doing any tree planting. She was able to go to the DPW to examine the new water truck which is larger and more complex than she expected it to be and noted that it is compatible with an existing DPW vehicle and does provide pressurized water. Since we've been unable to do a tree planting for Arbor Day, Kristen suggested that perhaps we could contact Bob Glowacky and have him film various activities that we've been involved with, such as the installation of tree diapers, labels, the maintenance of trees, and the water truck. We will contact Jay and Kirk to see if there is a day or time that they would have free to get involved with any Arbor Day plans. The Christmas parade is on December 6 (first Saturday in December) and there was much discussion about having the watering truck in the parade. It would be a novelty and a great way to showcase this new equipment. Niko advised us to contact Steve Cronin at DPW to see if there would be staff available to assist, and whether he would have funding for a person to drive the truck. Also, we should contact Beth Dupell to obtain further information about the parade. When we have more information, a decision will be made about

choosing to pursue the making of a 'film', or if we can move forward with the parade idea.

Eileen needs our volunteer hours for her end-of-year report to Tree City and noted that any time spent outside of meeting hours should be sent to Kristen.

At a future Conservation Commission meeting Kristen will raise the topic of tree planting at Raynes farm as she is concerned about doing anything on that site that might conflict with haying operations. She noted that it might be possible to plant trees near the old cemetery on the farm property.

Sally Oxnard noted that she has five or six reasonably sized oaks that could be dug up and moved to a new site if the committee is interested in doing that. Steve Jones also has some Liberty Elm saplings that could be used.

The idea of planting a Liberty Elm at the American Independence Museum is still a priority, and Niko will reach out to Joe Pace about this.

The Arbor Day paperwork is due at the end of December (we have typically submitted it in November but this year we'll need more time)

Kristen reminded us that news of the PREP Grant that she submitted will arrive before the end of December 2025.

Steve noted that it would be prudent to plant a tree (s) in April or May of 2026, and that there are trees being held for us at Stratham Circle Nursery.

Eileen is still trying to gather pictures of the old birch in Swasey Parkway but has only gotten a few responses so far from the public. Sally Oxnard did reach out to Florence Ruffner, hoping that she might have found some information about Swasey Parkway and specifically about the birch through the sale of the Baptist Church but unfortunately Florence did not have anything that would be helpful to us. She suggested reaching out to Dwane Staples and Mark Damsell. (Current and previous trustees of Swasey Parkway.). Steve estimates that the birch is between eighty and ninety years old.

Kristen would like to work on educating property owners about trees, and through the education process make property owners aware that they have the ability to impact our town and our environment in positive ways. She is worried that the more rules and regulations we impose on people, the more pushback we could eventually get, particularly when enforcement is concerned. Eileen agrees and likes the positive angle vs. "beating people over the head."

Gwen wonders if we could consider implementing a regulation for new developments whereby developers would make contributions to a tree fund based on trees cut down/removed on the development site. Kristen likes the idea of having a pool of funds from developers that can go into plantings for the Tree Committee. Kristen and/or Gwen will talk with Carol Ogilvie, our interim Town Planner, about the 'tree for a tree' idea, and perhaps she will know of other communities that might have implemented this in their planning process.

Kristen also suggested that we consider putting more emphasis on the planting of trees that should be avoided vs. planting only native trees that are on our list that was created in 2019. With our climate changing, it may be important to "diversify the forest" and consider planting trees from more southern areas.

Deb brought up Homegrown National Park – Regenerate Biodiversity and felt that this is something we should look into.

The subject arose of individuals cutting down trees thinking that the absence of trees would help dry out their property when in fact it will do just the opposite. This is another example of a topic we could raise when developing an educational program.

Different point to consider:

1. Revisit the tree list
2. Research an ordinance-Impact Fee
3. Messaging, i.e. Douglas Tallamy (Homegrown National Park)

Meeting adjourned at 9:35

Next meeting JANUARY 13, 2026

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 11/18/2025