

Town of Exeter

TREE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES FOR MAY 12, 2026

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eileen Flockhart (Chairwoman), Sally Ward, Gwen English, Niko Papakonstantis (Selectboard representative)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Bisson, Kirk Scamman

II. CALL TO ORDER:

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

III. NEW BUSINESS:

The committee did not have a quorum at this time, so will wait until later to review last month's minutes.

Eileen noted that the Raynes Farm Arbor Day celebration was a success, as was the Alewife Festival that was held on Saturday. She reminded the committee that the celebration of Swasey Parkway's birch tree will be this coming Saturday. TEAM (Town of Exeter Arts and Music) will also be having an event on the Parkway between 10:00 and 5:00. Greg will provide the Tree Committee with 3 tables and 12 chairs and will put them in the gazebo/pavilion.

Steve Jones arrived at 8:35

Steve moved to approve the minutes from April 14, and Sally Ward seconded the motion. Sally did question the first sentence on page 2 about the tree diapers. Gwen explained that we are hoping that the tree diapers that were on the elms at the library will be usable when the trees are transplanted at Raynes Farm.

Sara Sankowich arrived. (Time not noted.)

Eileen went on to say that we'll have two artists with their original artwork as well as a musician present at Swasey. She's hoping people will come with stories about the birch tree. Arts/craft projects will also be provided, and a line of some sort will be hung for displaying participants' artwork. A speaker and an amp. will also be brought to the site. Kirk will make sure we have a trash bin.

On Monday, 5/18 a Kwanzan cherry and a red maple will be planted at Lincoln Street School. There are two posts in front of the school indicating where they will be planted. DPW will dig the holes and set the trees, and students from the

Green Team will water the trees and shovel the soil back in around the trees. (Kirk can provide shovels if they are needed). The Kwanzan Cherry is being planted in honor of Ms. Jessie Schur who worked at the school and was loved by the students. Committee members felt it would be nice to invite members of her family to this event.

Steve indicated that he has looked at all the park trees and has removed the collars and stakes from trees that no longer need them.

Seven more trees may get planted this week. Two at Greg's building on Hampton Road, one at Park Street, three at Gilman Park and one at Swasey. (The tree at Swasey is a dedication tree)

Kirk Scamman left the meeting at 8:55

Kristen arrived at 8:55

Sara informed us that Unitil planted two more trees (A star magnolia and a dogwood) on Powder Mill Road near the Toomey's home. We had a brief discussion about tulip trees with Sara noting that they do grow fast and can be brittle, but there is reason to plant them in certain locations and conditions.

Kristen gave us an update on the Re-Leaf project and indicated that everything is signed and executed. (UNH is the 'issuer') She bought custom, heat sensitive pencils for 'swag', and has submitted a list of planting locations to Kirk. Sally W. and Sally Oxnard assisted Kristen in finding locations for planting trees, and it is still necessary to find 'lack of conflict' locations. We have more than 28 identified locations for trees. The next step will be creating interpretive signage. Niko noted that we are still in a Level 4 drought and informed the group that we are facing a massive El Nino 'like we've never seen'. It will be hot and dry this summer. This led to discussions about watering trees and attempting to keep the newly planted trees alive. Kristen noted that with a donation to St. Vincent de Paul, water barrels can be obtained at DPW, and Arjay's has the parts for assembling them. See details on the DPW website. Sara Sankowich indicated that Unitil has storage tanks which provide them with water for washing their trucks etc. Exeter should consider having some as well, and perhaps some rain barrels. It would be ideal if something could be created for filling the Town's water tank truck with rainwater!

Sally O. and Sally W. walked down Front Street looking at planting sites and Sara will check the addresses for places where 'short trees' are needed due to overhead lines. Kristen can check for stormwater, water and sewer lines, but does not have information on gas line locations.

Eileen would like to get more information to the public about trees over the summer months, particularly when it concerns drought conditions. It could include "Right trees, Right place" information on planting trees. Having information on tree diapers would also be helpful. Sara proposed that we create an award through an educational fund as a way to engage kids. Eileen wonders if the Green Team could be involved in this. We could also highlight kids planting trees, such as the tree being planted for Ms. Jessie. Since there is currently no reporter assigned to Exeter, we could take pictures and supply all the information to Patrick Cronin (Editor at Seacoast Media Group) *Note: Must make sure names and photos of children can be publicized.*

Niko Papakonstantis and Steve Jones leave at 9:30

Greg noted that Will Curtis cleaned up the invasives at the rec site and said that the big ash tree next to the garage is showing signs of the ash borer and recommends that the tree be cut down. We can plant another tree there after that is done.

NEXT MEETING: June 9, 2026, at 8:30AM

Meeting adjourned at 9:35

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on May 11, 2026

