

Town of Exeter

TREE COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES FOR JULY 14, 2026

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy, Greg Bisson, Kirk Scamman, Bob Glowacky

II. CALL TO ORDER:

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

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from June 9 were approved without changes. Motion to approve by Sally Ward, seconded by Steve Jones. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Eileen reported that the film of the 'Birch Tree event' was done and she would like to make it readily available to the public as part of an historical review of this special tree. Wonders if it could go to the Swasey Trustees, the Historical Society, and/or the library. Sally questioned whether Eileen wants a physical display. Sara followed up on this, asking whether this would be a collection of photos, educational materials on birch trees, and perhaps individuals' memories of the birch tree. Deb thought it could be a broader topic which might include details about the Tree Committee. Eileen indicated she would start by talking with Julie Lanter (director of the library) and go from there. Bob Glowacky informed us that nothing is deleted, and film of the birch tree can be found on YouTube. Kristen can find it and share it as well.

Eileen informed us that Exeter is now at a Level 3 drought, down from a Level 4.

Sally asked about using the watering truck now and Kirk will look into this.

Deb noted that the Unitarian Church has six water barrels that take care of their watering needs. Bob noted that The Level 3 ban information is up on the web site. Kirk feels that the water truck could be loaded the night before watering is planned, and they could have it ready to use at 7:00. Kristen wants to have an educational piece about the drought and extreme heat which ties into the water ban and the Heat Re-Leaf grant program. Steve feels we should re-post literature

on the tree canopy. Sara added that we need to reconnect people with the concept of taking care of trees...trees we depend on for cooling shade! Eileen suggested that we take temperatures at various locations around Town (i.e. parking lots and areas with a healthy tree canopy) and provide this information to the public. This actually would be a great school project. Kirk noted that the municipal/DPW trucks are fitted with thermometers. Bob likes the idea of going on the trucks and taking videos of all the sites and the temperatures at those sites!

Bob indicated that there is no information on the website about the Re-Leaf project. There are no 'actionable' subjects yet on the Re-Leaf project.

Bob asked about identifying neighborhood trees and whether they are being cared for. Kristen doesn't want track tree stewards. Bob wonders if there could be a 'Tips and Tricks' subject for residents with information about what is allowed with pruning and watering etc.

The discussion went back to having someone film from a DPW vehicle and thought it could include tree diapers, the newly planted tree on Water Street etc. Could talk about the cooling impact of trees....and have a huge thermometer for the visual effect!

Greg has 20 tree labels and Kirk said he has granite posts and can go to Concord for more if needed. We do have a list and location for these. Sally noted that we need to add new trees to the spread sheet. Kirk will do this. (For example, the tree that was run over on Water Street now has a replacement. Town's insurance will pay for this, and then the driver's insurance will get charged.)

Roughly 60 trees have been planted! The monitoring of conditions of trees in town is ongoing. Eileen wondered what we can do (pruning wise) and what shouldn't we do. What is the protocol. Kirk indicated that he wants to know what needs to be done so he can make a list. The public should know that tree issues (such as downed limbs) should be addressed through DPW. (Contact Trish-DPW dispatch) Kirk noted that trees area suffering from the drought and as a result, we will have more tree issues in the months and years ahead.

Sara informed us about a product called Tree Growth Regulator which improves fibrous roots of trees so they actively pick up water, improve resistance to diseases and thickens the leaves on the trees, helping the trees stay healthy. This product is particularly good for big, (18+ diameter) old trees. She's found that the biggest issues from the public revolve around chemicals being used with TGR. We all need to consider the aesthetics and long-term health of the trees.

Could do a cost/benefit analysis. If you lose a tree, it will be 50 years before a newly planted tree will reach the size of the lost tree! Sara also asked if there are particular trees that we want to protect! Kristen noted that we have \$20,000. For contract maintenance. Should we have a budget for taking care of the health and preventative maintenance of our existing trees?! Consider that it costs \$500-\$700 to plant a tree! Sara noted that TGR works on bigger trees and that the treatment for Ash Tree Borer and the Birch tree diseases work better on little trees.

Deb brought up the 20 +/- trees on Holland Ave. and feels that tree diapers are needed on those. She would like to go out and assess the health of these trees. Kirk indicated that they do roadside maintenance and that strip is mowed at least once a year. (Greg mows the perimeter and Kirk does the middle) It was noted that those trees are little, and that it is very wet out there which does pose mowing challenges. Someone mentioned the possibility of mulching around those trees, but Kristen felt the mulch might wash out in bigger storms.

Eileen would like to work on setting priorities for trees that need to be watered by the truck. Kirk feels that watering should be directed to trees planted in the last three years, particularly trees planted this spring. Before Bob left, he wondered if we should look into having sponsors for the care of new trees!

Kristen went to Main Street School and spoke with Beth Cadorette (Principal) about the Re-Leaf project and Beth is excited about this. They need trees for shade. Eileen will reach out to Beth and will work on this with her.

Travis Thompson is the new Director of Facilities at SAU 16. We should have him meet with us. Kristen indicated she will be meeting with him next week! (Steve pointed out that kids go back to school on August 31)

Eileen brought up the 250 celebrations and indicated that Joe Pace is interested in planting a new tree at the AIM site. We'd like to see that happen, but it will be up to them to do the digging and planting. Niko has a meeting in August with the 250th group and he'll get more information about tree planting then.

Kristen reminded the group that the Raynes Barn will be having its grand re-opening from 10:00-1:00 on July 18.

Next meeting on August 11, 2026, at 8:30AM

No meeting date is scheduled yet for September.

Meeting concluded at 9:35AM

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 7/18/2026