



TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PUBLIC NOTICE EXETER CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S Subcommittee: Exeter Tree Committee

The Exeter Tree Committee will meet virtually via ZOOM (see connection info below* and details attached) on Wednesday, May 5th, 2021 at 8:30 A.M.

Call to Order:

1. Reading of 91-A meeting preamble
2. Roll call attendance

Agenda Items

1. Approval of Minutes from April 7th, 2021 Meeting
2. Park Street Common Tree Planting Ceremony Update
3. Gilman Park Trees
4. Review of Draft Tree Ordinance

*Eileen Flockhart, Chair
Exeter Tree Committee*

Posted May 3rd 2021 Exeter Town Website www.exeternh.gov and Exeter Town Offices

***PUBLIC MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION:**

Virtual Meetings can be watched on Channel 22 and on Exeter TV's Facebook and YouTube pages.

To participate in public comment, click this link: <https://exeternh.zoom.us/j/88500921005>
To participate via telephone, call: +1 646 558 8656 and enter the Webinar ID: 885 0092 1005

Please join the meeting with your full name if you want to speak.

Use the "Raise Hand" button to alert the chair you wish to speak. On the phone, press *9.

More instructions for how to participate can be found here: <https://www.exeternh.gov/townmanager/virtual-town-meetings>

Contact us at extvg@exeternh.gov or 603-418-6425 with any technical issues.

TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Exeter Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2020

Members Present: Eileen Flockhart (chair), Sarah Sankowich, Sally Ward,
Gwen English, Deb Twombly, Greg Jordan

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Greg Bisson, and Jay Perkins

Meeting began at 9:00AM with Eileen Flockhart reading the 91-A-2 emergency preamble and calling the roll.

Eileen summarized a March 9 meeting she and Sara Sankowich had with the Lincoln Street School's Green Team that included teachers Keith Schmitt and Katie Pupino.

The students were asked about their favorite trees, and there was a discussion about the new tree that will be planted on the LSS grounds near the buddy bench. Their classroom projects include a writing activity, as well as drawing and taking photographs of trees. Thoughts about raising awareness of these projects during this pandemic and school closure include attempts to get television and newspaper coverage.

Eileen has visited Stratham Hill Nursery to look at trees. Chinese Elm and Sycamore are possibilities. These typically run \$300-\$500, but Dave Short, at the nursery, will work on a better price, perhaps in the \$250 range. Exeter Public Works will contact Dig Safe, and assist with planting the tree. Planting in June is a possibility.

Eileen Flockhart explained that Tree City USA has waived the Arbor Day requirement for reapplication to Tree City for this year due to the Covid-19 crisis. Volunteers should continue to log volunteer hours for that reapplication.

Discussions ensued about the selection of trees. We should consider trees that: offer shade, do not bear fruit, can withstand being climbed on by children and would be appropriate for this climate. Tulip poplar, Sycamore, Beech are possibilities.

Even though a tree planting date is uncertain, we need to select the tree type and perhaps reserve a tree while the selection is good. We agree that for this first tree, working with a local nursery would be best. Jay Perkins announced that Public works is willing to give us up to \$500 toward a tree.

Care and maintenance of newly planted trees is a concern, and we need to protect our investment. This could also be part of the learning experience for everyone in Town. Greg Bisson has tree diapers we could use to solve some of the issues and difficulties relating to watering. We could consider establishing a tree steward program, and can get details on that from a tree steward statewide program that Sara Sankowich is familiar with, and Greg Jordan also has information on the Natural Resources stewards. Perhaps a special TV production, or a YouTube video would be a useful educational tool.

TreeCityUSA signs (and probably a flag) will be in our hands soon, and we need to decide where to place the signs. The traffic island on Rt. 111 was proposed, as well as Lincoln Street. We want visibility as well as trees nearby.

Talked about expanding TreeCityUSA page and were advised that official Town committees should not have separate pages, and it would be most logical for us to connect with the already established Conservation Commission Facebook page which has a big following. Parks and Recreation is also a widely used site and they would be happy to help.

Bob Glowacky offered another idea about Thursday's 4:30 PM 'Weekly Report' which shares stories about what is going on in Town. This can include a 'green minute' (in video form) from various Exeter committees or individuals in Town.

The Tree Committee could put together a little video package promoting our ideas, and sharing tips on planting, pruning, and taking care of trees.

More discussions followed on the funding of gators and tree diapers, and how to set up a funding mechanism for people who would like to donate to this cause. Kristen Murphy stated that the Conservation Commission has a Conservation Fund and any donations to the Commission can get put into that fund. It is non-lapsing, and donations can be earmarked for a specific purpose.

Kristen Murphy mentioned two efforts she is hoping to connect to our group. One is the *Bud Burst* program of data collection she has begun with the classes at the Cooperative Middle School which they are doing online now. The other is the yearly tree distribution done by Peter Waltz. He is working on a video presentation about that, and they are trying to find a way to distribute the tree seedlings to LSS school 4th grade children. We should perhaps get involved with his efforts, and fold this in with what we're doing.

A specific date for our next meeting has not yet been made.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Gwen English

DRAFT

April 26, 2021

Town of Exeter Tree Ordinance

Preamble

Trees are one of Exeter's greatest natural resources, providing vital aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits to our community. They line our streets, parks, playgrounds and backyards, creating a peaceful, pleasing environment by bringing the natural elements into our downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Trees are a vital part of our world, contributing to our environment by improving air quality, moderating local climate by providing shade and regulating temperature extremes, increasing wildlife habitat, preserving soil, assisting with water conservation, and improving the land's capacity to adapt to climate change.

Trees serve as an indicator of Exeter's health and livability, and they need to be managed, preserved, and protected for the economic and social wellbeing of our Town for current and future generations.

Given the importance of trees, it is appropriate to establish guidelines for the planning of trees in Exeter's public spaces. A Tree Committee was established in 2019 as a sub-committee of the Conservation Commission, and has drafted this document (The Tree Ordinance) to provide guidance for achieving the purposes listed below.

Purpose

The purpose of this **tree ordinance** is to encourage the proper management of community trees within the Town of Exeter; **and** to establish a standard of care and provide clear guidance to Town officials, public utilities, arborists, and residents regarding the planning, planting, preservation, maintenance, care, and removal of trees on public land and public rights of way within the Town of Exeter; **and** to establish and assign proper authority regarding care of community trees on public land and public rights of way within the Town of Exeter.

This ordinance is intended to supplement specifications that already exist in Town documents and regulations concerning the planning, planting, maintenance, and other issues regarding the care of trees.

Goals

The goals of the Tree Ordinance are to:

- Generate a master plan governing tree planting, maintenance and removal.
- Create and maintain a healthy, diverse, and noninvasive tree cover on our streets and in our parks.
- Identify spaces where new trees would add to the natural resources of the Town.
- Maintain a data base inventory of Exeter's street trees, to be updated annually.
- Centralize tree management.
- Encourage the formation of meaningful partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and residents to ensure the protection and proper maintenance of trees.
- Encourage good tree management on privately owned properties by providing information for property owners about the value of planting and maintaining appropriate trees in private spaces.
- Provide information and education for all Town residents about the value of providing public funds to achieve these goals.

Exeter Tree Committee

The Exeter Tree Committee was created in 2019 as part of the Town of Exeter's efforts to be officially recognized as a Tree City. The Committee is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, and is made up of volunteers who will:

- Coordinate efforts in support of Exeter's **Tree City USA*** designation;
- Aid in carrying out the provisions of this ordinance;
- Collaborate with the Tree Warden, Town departments, and other Town officials to foster a tree-rich community;
- Help monitor the health and protection of public trees;
- Work to update our inventory of public trees;
- Seek grants and secure funds to further and support the work of the committee;
- Advance educational efforts to promote awareness and knowledge of the benefits of trees.

* Tree City USA is a national recognition program that began in 1976 and is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. In 2019, Exeter earned its designation as a Tree City USA! More information on Tree City USA can be found [here](#).

More information on the Tree Committee can be found [here](#).

Tree Warden

The Exeter Tree Warden is an appointed official with relevant training and/or experience, who is the contact person for questions about public trees, and for permission to prune and/or remove trees in public places. The Tree Warden works with and is supported by the Exeter Tree Committee.

The Tree Warden's job may include, but is not limited to the oversight of the following:

- Pruning of trees for health and safety;
- Removal of trees that are dead or dying;
- Identification of sites for planting new trees;
- Planting new trees;
- Maintaining an inventory of public trees;
- Supervising Town tree workers;
- Inspecting contracted tree work.

Questions about Public Trees are addressed to the Tree Warden.

Standards and Specifications

Definitions

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)

The measurement of a tree's trunk diameter in inches at breast height 4 ½ feet above ground level at the tree's base. For trees with less than 4 ½ feet of clear trunk, the diameter shall be of the largest leader measured 4 ½ feet above ground level. For multi-trunk trees, it shall be the sum of the diameter of the individual trunks measured 4 ½ feet above ground level.

Drip Line

The area defined by the outermost circumference of the tree's canopy, from which water drips onto the ground. It is the imaginary circle that you would draw on the soil around a tree directly under the outermost branch tips. This is also known as a tree's critical loft zone or root protection zone.

Hazard Tree

A tree that has defects or structural weaknesses that may cause a failure resulting in property damage, personal injury or death. As defined by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), a hazard tree must meet three (3) criteria:

- (1) The tree is sufficiently large enough to cause damage should it fall;
- (2) The tree has a target that would be damaged should it fall;

(3) The tree has a condition that would make it likely to fall.

Invasive Species

An alien or an introduced organism that causes ecological harm, or is likely to cause harm in a new environment where it is not native. Invasive species can lead to extinction of native plants or animals, destroy biodiversity and permanently alter habitats.

Maintenance of Trees

Activities, equipment, plans and provisions to keep trees alive and flourishing.

Mitigation Plan

A document submitted as part of a permit application whenever any public trees are proposed to be removed.

Ordinance

An authoritative rule or law passed by a municipal government.

Park

An area of land, usually in a largely natural state, owned and managed by the Town and set aside for environmental protection and/or recreation.

A list of parks can be found [here](#).

Pollarding

A formal pruning technique involving the removal of upper branches of a young tree thus promoting the dense, globe-like head of foliage and branches.

Pollarding is usually done with design in mind. (It is *not* the same as topping.)

Property Owner

A person or business entity with a legal or equitable interest in a property.

(As shown by the Town's Assessor's list.)

Pruning

A horticultural practice of selectively cutting/removing specific portions of a tree (such as roots, buds, branches) that are dead, undesirable or overgrown *OR* trimming for healthy plant development and aesthetic purposes. Pruning can be considered preventive maintenance.

Public Places

Includes all streets, highways, parks, cemeteries, easements or other grounds owned by the Town. This includes public easements along all public roads to the property line. Property owners should ascertain the public easement along their property line before any tree work, including pruning, removal, or planting occurs. Questions can be addressed to the Tree Warden or the Code Enforcement Officer of the Town.

Public Trees and Street Trees

Public Trees refers to trees, shrubs and other woody vegetation within the public right-of-way and on any public property. This includes shade, ornamental and forest trees or shrubs growing on any street, park, cemetery, or public place. Street Trees refers to trees and other woody vegetation growing on public streets and on land lying within the public right-of-way.

Replacement Trees

A tree or trees to be planted to replace any trees removed.

Significant Trees

Significant trees, as defined in Exeter’s Site and Subdivision regulations, are 20-inches or greater in diameter at breast height.

Stop Work Order

The issuance of an order to immediately discontinue work that affects trees.

Tree Maintenance

Activities, equipment, plans and provisions to keep trees alive and flourishing.

Tree Topping

The severe practice of removing whole tops of trees, or large branches/trunks from the tops of trees, leaving only lateral branches and stumps on the tree. (Topping is not the same as “pollarding”.)

Regulations and Requirements

- Public input shall be obtained in cases where significant trees on public property are to be removed.
- Contractors must follow best practices for selecting, planting, and maintaining trees as part of any contract from the Town of Exeter.
- The Tree Warden has authority for overseeing the work of contractors, consulting with the Tree Committee as needed.
- Funding Provisions of this Tree Ordinance

It is the goal of the Tree Committee to work with the Town to establish a fund that will support the activities of the Committee.

This would include:

- (1) Funds for tree work such as labeling public trees in Town;
- (2) Funds to cover the expense of an arborist consultant when needed to

- assess the health of current trees;
(3) Funds to plan for the planting of new trees in public places.

Resources

The [Arbor Day Foundation](#) is an excellent resource for information about trees.

Recommended Trees ([hyperlink here](#))

Trees to be avoided ([hyperlink here](#))

Guidelines for proper planting can be found in this [link](#) from the Arbor Day Foundation.

Guidelines for maintenance

Extensive information about trees is found at the [UNH Cooperative Extension](#) site.

Tips for identifying trees can be found [here](#) from the Arbor Day Foundation.