

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
MINUTES FOR 9/10/2024

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

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

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Eileen Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:40

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from 8/13/2024 were approved without changes. Motion to approve was made by Steve Jones and seconded by Deb Twombly

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Eileen reminded the committee members that we are due to meet with the Selectboard on Monday, 9/16 at 7:00. We likely will be first on the agenda. She suggested some topics to review including the tree inventory, a recap of the planting of trees during 2024, a discussion about what we need for funding in 2025, and what we would do with those funds.

Kristen suggested that we have slides to show as we have done previously, and a list was created based upon her thoughts and input from the committee.

1. Inform the SB members that the Tree Committee meets monthly
2. That we regularly post information on social media
3. Give them an update on our goal to plant eight trees this year
4. The acquisition of a chipper
5. The acquisition of a watering tank
6. Our work with arborists
7. Progress with the Tree Inventory App/dashboard
8. Growth award
9. Tree City USA
10. The planting of trees, including the Library, Lincoln Street School, the dinosaur playground, Glenerin Lane, etc.
11. The donation of Elms by Steve Jones (and other contributions)

Kristen noted that our biggest gap in the presentation is our plan for 2025. What is our planting goal?

Kirk noted that we still have three trees to plant this year, on Water Street. He also informed the committee that a sugar maple is coming down at 79 Front Street and another will be planted in its place. We also will be removing two trees recently planted at the Library and those need to be replanted (before October 15) at a yet-to-be determined location, though the green space in front of Access Sports on High Street was suggested. Steve indicated that the trees should be roughly 30' apart.

The conditions at the Water Street location are challenging and more thought needs to be put into the type of tree(s) that will be placed there. It gets very little if any sun, and it gets a considerable amount of salt in the wintertime, *and* the space is tight. There was talk of container grown trees, pagoda dogwoods, and hawthorn trees but no decisions were made. Gwen will contact Jen Martel to see if she has suggestions.

We then discussed what type of tree(s) we might put in place of the trees coming out of the Library lot. Everyone felt that flowering trees (i.e. lilacs) and perhaps some shrubs would be suitable. Sally proposed that a dogwood might also be a nice tree choice for the Library.

According to Greg Bisson, the new Planet Playground will need trees, but that cost is included in the budget for Parks and Recreation. Eileen wondered about Brickyard Park and asked Greg if he could put together a wish list for that area. She also wondered if more trees would be good to have at the new Parks and Recreation building. Perhaps those could be goals for 2025.

In looking at 2025, Kirk suggests aiming to plant 10-12 new trees. Eileen would like to 'shoot for success' and feels that planting 10-15 trees is a reasonable goal.

Greg also informed us that a tree behind Gilman House needs to be taken down. Sally commented on several trees on Lincoln Street that are either dead or dying. Replacing those will now be the responsibility of the Town.

Eileen discovered that there is a label missing (on an Ash?) in Swasey Parkway that will need to be replaced. She wondered if we want to expand the labeling project, and maybe include trees on Water Street. We could put labels on the trees instead of granite posts which could be tripping hazards there.

The planting of trees on Water Street will hopefully take place on 9/17 at around 11:00. Work needs to be done on the sidewalk first, and Kirk explained that the

bricks need to be taken up and the vaults need to be exposed. Trees will need to be chosen and tagged before then.

Sally commented that we won't need more equipment for next year, but the committee agreed that having a stock of ten or more tree diapers would be a good idea. They cost, on average, about \$40-50 each. Steve calculated that the cost of a tree, including tree diapers, is approximately \$800. He is happy to contribute the tree trunk protection pieces that he makes from conduit covers.

9:15 Jay and Kirk left the meeting

Steve reported that he had completed a tree inventory at Gale Park. (+/- 26 trees including yews, maples and Elms.)

The topic of pruning is something we should include in future plans. This would include having a workshop on tree maintenance. Eileen notes that we need to keep our trees healthy. Greg feels that many of our trees should be pruned yearly. Kristen's understanding is that pruning is contracted through DPW, though it may be 'hazard tree focused'. We may want to focus on boosting our maintenance funds. We have a huge deficit for tree maintenance.

Sally Ward feels that it's not a 'one and done' when it comes to planting trees! Sally Oxnard would like us to put maintenance and pruning on our next agenda. Sally Ward would like to work on labeling all trees that we plant, though Kristen is concerned that labels will be stolen.

The 'story map' for the tree inventory is available online.

Committee members who are volunteering at the polls can explain the tree inventory to voters, and we'll have a sign-up sheet for volunteers at the polls. Kristen would like to work one on one with volunteers (to give them a tutorial on how to use the app) though if we have a large number of individuals signing up, she will work with them as a group.

There are some concerns about accuracy of the app, but it was noted that satellite locations can impact the accuracy.

Kristen informed the committee that Dakota is leaving RPC, but we have Heather, the Town's GIS coordinator to assist us.

A reminder that the Selectboard meeting is Monday, Sept. 16th at 7:00

NEXT TREE COMMITTEE MEETING IS OCTOBER 8 AT 8:30AM in the Wheelwright Room.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 9/13/2024

