

Town of Exeter
EXETER TREE COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES FOR 10/08/2024

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Murphy, Jay Perkins, Kirk Scamman

II. CALL TO ORDER:

Eileen called the meeting to order at 8:30

III. OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from September 10, 2024, were approved without changes.
(Motion to approve made by Sally Ward, seconded by Eileen Flockhart)

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jana Toomey and Sue Hanson of Exeter attended the meeting to share their concerns about a large ash tree on the public right of way on Powder Mill Road that was being cut down by Asplundh per the order of UNITIL. Mrs. Hanson contacted Jay Perkins who went to the site and stopped them from continuing with the cutting of the tree. Kevin Breen subsequently examined the tree to make an assessment. It was brought to the board's attention that this tree is on a Scenic Road, and apparently UNITIL was unaware of this (there is no signage on the road indicating such) and was also unaware that there are other Scenic Roads in Town. Because of the Scenic Road status, tree management issues are required to go before the Planning Board for a public hearing. Kristen noted that beyond the Scenic Road we would have minimal jurisdiction over issues like this.

That said, UNITIL does need to have written permission for homeowners before they can cut a tree down that is on private property.

Eileen feels that it is important for all to know that we (Tree Committee) exist. That Jay, our Tree Warden, exists. That there is a process to follow in situations such as this.

Jay responded that we all do our best to educate homeowners about what trees are a hazard and what trees are not. He also has volunteered to contact the state about acquiring Scenic Road signage. Kirk feels that we should note all the Scenic Roads and include the proper RSA. (231:157 and/or 231:158)

Eileen said that signage, awareness and education are important factors here. Perhaps we could do a 'spot' on TV with the help of Bob Glowacky. She would also like to have a follow up conversation with Sara Sankowich at UNITIL, and perhaps Sara would be willing to attend a Tree Committee meeting if her schedule allows.

Jana will consider reaching out to her neighbors with a letter informing them about the road's status as a Scenic Road.

Eileen would like Jana to attend our next meeting so we can keep her, and Sue, updated on all of this. Jana is happy to do this, and her final request is that we have a second arborist examine and assess the ash tree.

Jay wants to send a message that "We want the work done right".

Jana and Sue left the meeting at approximately 9:10.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Kristen had six people signed up for the tree survey and unfortunately had to cancel the training but will reschedule the event soon.

Eileen has gotten some volunteer hours from everyone and reminded others to supply her with that information for her end-of-year report.

Kirk looked at the Beech Tree at Gilman Park and after an inspection thinks that there is no reason to take it down. It is not a hazard at the moment.

The committee discussed the tree on Water Street (near the two that we recently planted) that desperately needs a larger grate. We'll need permission from the bank (or the building owner) to do this...it will require pulling up the bricks and putting in the new grate. Kristen will contact the appropriate individuals.

Kirk reported on the Library trees that need to be relocated. According to Dig Safe, there is an 8" and 4" gas line going through the ROW in front of Access Sports. We can plant those two trees close to the sidewalk, but they may not line up. Kirk is confident that we can find a place to plant them though.

There are three trees on Lincoln Street that need to be replaced as they likely died because of improper planting methods when they were put in several years ago. We will need to select replacements that, when full grown, won't impact the power lines.

The last set of trees will go to Brickyard Park. Since DPW will have the equipment on site for this, Kirk feels that it makes sense to plant two trees there. Dig Safe will need to come and check this site as well before any trees are planted.

The timing for plantings was discussed and it was decided that:

1. The Lincoln Street trees would be planted on October 15. (3 trees)
2. Brickyard Park trees would be planted on October 22nd. (2 trees)
3. The Library trees would be planted/replanted on October 29th. (2 trees)

All the above...weather permitting

Kirk and Jay reminded the committee that the water tank is in!
The chipper body is here and is a big help! (It is a 16 yard)

Sally and Gwen will go to Stratham Circle Nursery tomorrow (10/09) to look at trees. Gwen will consult with Jen Martel about the Lincoln Street trees.

Gwen and Jay left the meeting at 9:30.

No notes were taken after 9:30. Meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Next meeting date will be November 12, 2024, at 8:30AM unless otherwise notified.

Minutes Respectfully submitted by Gwen English on October 10, 2024