

Town of Exeter

TREE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES FOR 2/11/2025

I. PRELIMINARIES:

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristen Murphy, Greg Bisson

II. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Flockhart called the meeting to order at 8:35

III. OLD BUSINESS: Motion to approve minutes from 1/14/2025 made by Sally Ward, seconded by Sally Oxnard. No changes to the original minutes.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Sally Oxnard reported that she has exchanged emails with John Brough at EHS about the William Robinson Trust Fund Grant and he is interested but didn't have enough time to meet the Grant deadline this year. He has seen the microforests in Japan and is excited about working on a microforest project with students at the High School. Since he has the interest, and has seen a microforest, we would love to have him do a presentation. Sally will contact him about this.

The consensus is that we should have a table at the polls on March 11, with the goal of getting people interested in street trees and helping us with our tree inventory. Kristen could bring the materials used for a previous public event as well as a sign-up list. (She has 11 names already). Having a Tree Committee presence for three hours should be enough. Sally has volunteered to be at the table from 11:00-1:00 and will try to recruit Steve Jones to help.

Eileen feels it is time to do a presentation for the Conservation Commission on the work we have been doing. Kristen will look into the possibility of getting on their agenda on April 8 or May 13. Eileen is hopeful that this presentation would lead to a good discussion with ConCom members and she/we would welcome questions and comments from them.

Sally Oxnard inquired about the availability of a map of trees that have been planted. Kristen will play with this. She said that most of the trees we've planted are not yet recorded in the inventory. Sally Ward would like to have Kristen update us on which ones have not been done. Labeled trees should be a separate project.

We still need to re-locate two trees that are at the library. Greg Bisson said that perhaps in **late** spring a tree could be put in at the new Recreation building. Also, the new playground could use more trees. There will be four substantially bigger trees going in at the playground (he will seek Tree Committee suggestions). Construction will begin in late April or early May, and it will take approximately two weeks to complete the project.

Greg also said that a memorial tree in Town House Common is no longer there and will need to be replaced. We will have to look at the plaque to get information about that memorial and will have to research this to see what type of tree had been there.

**F.Y.I. As with all new sites, we have 30 days to plant once Dig Safe has approved a site.*

Sally Oxnard wondered if we could add to the list at the polling station on March 11, a note about citizens signing up to have a tree planted in front of one's house. There was support for that. It would be important to have the homeowner agree to be a tree steward and take on the role of watering and caring for this new tree.

There was a brief discussion about planting a few trees by the parking lot at Brickyard Pond. No specifics today about the type of trees that would be suitable.

Eileen noted that Kevin Breen has been busy, and it is challenging for him to carve out time to do projects with/for us. We'd like to have help assessing tree health, and ideally, we should review tree health 2-3 times a year to determine problems with our trees. How do we approach maintenance? Kristen reminded us that using the inventory, we can pinpoint many issues. This led to the discussion of budget, and how the inventory can more accurately identify tree problems which ultimately results in developing cost figures that can be applied to budget requests.

We used Park Street Common as an example, knowing that there is a tree (or two) there that has health issues. A likely process in this particular case would be to evaluate the tree, prune if needed, and the last step would be to cut the tree down if absolutely necessary. It would be great to get a speaker who promotes pruning over removal, and we went on to discuss putting together a group of knowledgeable individuals and have them do a presentation in Town. Perhaps Jeff Toomey, Sara Sankowich, Greg Jordan (Rockingham County Forester/Forestry Field specialist) and

others would be good individuals to invite. This could be a live workshop with Exeter TV filming so the event could be seen on Ch. 22 and YouTube etc. Ideally, we could have it in a room that could accommodate 40-45 people, and would be planned for a Wednesday evening or another weeknight when no other meetings are taking place. (May 6 and May 14 are possibilities.). Kristen will review the calendar and coordinate this!

Sally Ward talked about labeling trees. We should focus on trees in the park(s) where people tend to walk. Also, the lower granite posts are best.

We would like to have a tree walk at Raynes Farm in late spring or early summer.

Stay tuned!

Meeting concluded at approximately 9:50AM

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 4, 2025

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gwen English on 2/12/2025