

Weston Tree Advisory Group minutes

February 6, 2019

Meeting held at DPW conference room

Present: Nina Danforth, Lori Hess, Ed Recka, Barbara Fullerton, Tom Cullen, Kristen Barbieri, Jon Zaccardi, Laura Perry

Absent: Marilyn Doyle, Luke Mcneil, John Skillman

Meeting called to order at 2:40pm

1) Citizen Comment; none

2) **Review of Minutes:**

a) **December 5, 2018:** reviewed Rail-Trail, clarified Concord vs. Conant Rd, and accepted revised version.

b) **December 12, 2018:** Clarified names: Emily Schadler showed Legacy Trail maps and Barbara Keene from Tree Specialists attended and presented. Minutes accepted.

c) **January 9, 2019:** John added that DCR recommends keeping water bags on trees only June-Sept, and then removing them to prevent damage to bark. Nina thanked Ed for tree bag removal. Minutes accepted.

3) **Arbor Day Planting:**

Possible sites discussed:

1) **Schools—Field School** in the side lot where 2 trees planted in 2015 have died. Kristin said that Ben Polimer had recommended this site. Of note, this is not near a water source and newly planted trees will have to be hand watered until they can get on the water truck route. Dr. Green, the principal, may also be asked if he has suggestions for sites.

Arbor Day ceremony participants will include parent(s) from the 5th grade, Ben Polimer, the Field school principal and 2 teachers; Kristin says this all must be approved by school Committee (this is already in the works). Plan is to do this event Fri, April 26, with actual planting the day before. Kristen will continue to hone in on best site for this year's school tree. Nina will check with Eversource to see if they will sponsor the planting again this year.

2) **Transfer Station**—we discussed possibility of willows in the wet area: perhaps a cluster of 3: weeping willow, pussy willow and /or black willow. John Zaccardi will need to check with Conservation Committee and Cambridge Water Dept. to see if OK to have tree roots there.

3) **Chiltern/Ridgeway/Bullard triangle:** possibly American Holly?

4) **Silver Hill and Westland Rd** --Hawthorn? Nina says there are thornless varieties, "Winter King.

5) **Rt. 30 @ Highland** ---Relatively bare, unattractive triangle of land where adjacent farm vehicles are sometimes parked, construction items stored, etc. Tom says to hold on any planting here because grass may be put in first. Any plantings will also have to be thought out with regards to need for driver visibility at that intersection.

*So, potentially FOUR Arbor Day Tree sites (and more than 4 trees)

4) **Case Park Update**

Laura read aloud some key points of the new proposal and estimate emailed from Barbara Keene of Tree Specialists. The additional total cost looks like it might be \$12-20K, which seems like a big addition - since we were originally only looking for her guidance on the "forest edge"- but, as Nina pointed out, Barbara is

very knowledgeable, and she was invested in Tom Wirth's original plan, and also seems to genuinely care about this project, so the money may be well spent. Tom Cullen says that up to 10K additional would not be unreasonable and pointed out that this may not have to be re-presented to the Town if the cost stays below a certain (unstated) amount. Laura said that the "Maintenance" part of the proposed plan is really what we were seeking input on and that was estimated to be 14 hrs of payable hours to Tree Specialists, which would be less than 3K. Tom suggested that we look into additional bids.

Nina asked Ed to review the Burck Company proposal for Town Center, regarding tree plantings and removals.

Nina also brought up forming a subcommittee to get Case Park going by the July deadline.

In an aside, Barbara notified the group about an Ecological Landscape Symposium that she will be attending March 6-7 at UMass Amherst and she gave us handouts. The conference theme is water management; she says she will try to make some contacts there.

5) Updates on 2019 Town Projects/Tree removals:

a) **Case House renovation:** Nina noticed that a healthy 75 year-old hemlock adjacent to the octagonal conservatory is slated for removal; it leans towards the course of proposed handicap access ramp (not ON the ramp path, but very close to it). Barbara said that we should make a statement about saving it. Ed said that the tree is leaning and casting shadows and we should let them take it down. Laura brought up that it's a non-diseased hemlock, which may make it worth saving.

b) **The Ash Street sidewalk** part of the Legacy Trail is probably going to be taken out of the plan for this year, according to Tom Cullen. He says there are a lot of issues with regards to that section, and that roadwork and sidewalk creation should be completed together. Nina informed us that the Legacy Trail info is described on Weston Media channel and town website. The price tag for trail creation will be around \$750k and that will come out of the remaining funds left over after the purchase was finalized in early 2018.

c) **Weston Tree Inventory:** Tom reported we are in year 2 of a 3 year program. The Town started with scenic roads, and has since been moving from North to South with the inventory. He says that a lot of the high-risk trees have already fallen or been taken down. Tom envisions the third year as "Phase 1" of a Street Tree plan: encompassing long-term plans such as planning for mature canopy trees, choosing specific sites that need "work"—i.e., creating a Master Tree Plan. He will ask for a professional proposal from landscape architect.

d) **Rt 30/Wellesley St intersection:** Nina had earlier observed that some of the new street trees here are leaning. Tom has already brought this up to D.O.T. project manager.

e) **Spring Fling, Sat April 27:** Kristen noted that Weston Forest & Trail will have a table on town green. Says that the Rotary Club might be willing to cover the cost of approximately 100 seedling trees to give away. Nina added that if there is a site on Town Green where a new tree would be appropriate, then Spring Fling could list this as a special "Arbor Day" event.

f) **Rail Trail:** There was brief mention about having input on new trees at the Rail Trail, but Ed noted that since DCR still plans to do annual herbicide-spraying along the trail, we should not sponsor any tree planting there.

Kristin notified us that a training program on the **Emerald Ash Borer**, is offered by DCR on April 9, 2019. Weston has not reported any official sightings of this insect, but nearby towns have. More info on that will be available at the March meeting. Weston-Wellesley magazine is interested in covering a list of town tree "superlatives". This would make sense for us to have input and Tom thinks these may be on the Tree Inventory. The annual **Town Report** is due soon and there was discussion of including Tree information such as Arbor Day Tree details, Tree by-law ideas, Tree inventory info, etc. Nina will review what should be included.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Perry