

TREE ADVISORY GROUP
TOWN OF WESTON
MINUTES OF MARCH 13, 2019
TOWN HALL

Present: Chair Nina Danforth, Kristin Barbieri, Marilyn Doyle, Barbara Fullerton, Lori Hess, Luke Mcneil, Ed Recka

Absent: Laura Perry, John Skillman

Guests: Tree Warden Tom Cullen, Parks and Cemetery Superintendent John Zaccardi, Citizen Susan Luchetti

1. Citizen Comments: There were none.

2. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m., and the minutes of February 6 were reviewed and approved. Nina noted that tree watering bags were on tulip trees on Newton Street. John said he should be informed about bags overlooked, and he will see that they are removed.

3. Arbor Day April 26

Kristin reported that she and Dr. Green, Field School principal, walked around the Field School area and chose two sites suitable for tree planting. First choice for the Arbor Day tree is next to the playground, and a water source is nearby. The tree will be the fifth grade's donation for 2019. The other place is on a side lot where a tree planted previously has died. Another site for tree planting is Silver Hill and Westland roads. Tree of choice noted is tulip for the Field School, hawthorn "Winter King" for Silver Hill. It was noted that the Town Center Improvement Plan requires a hole with six foot diameter for trees to be planted. If Eversource undertakes donating and planting, would they supply enriched soil? The DPW has good soil at the brush dump. It contains weed seeds, and Barbara said a fabric cloth cover might be used to prevent emergence of weeds. Initially, fencing would be needed for protection of trees planted at Field School.

Nina asked if honey locust, though not a native tree, could be considered as an alternate tree if tulip is not available at local nurseries. Barbara prefers a native tree, and scarlet oak could be considered. Other sites mentioned for tree planting are the new section of the cemetery (in future) and the transfer station as long as planting is not near the pond. Willow and bald cypress are possibilities there. Tom stated that the plan for new trees should be sent to Eversource for their input.

Arbor Day is Friday, April 26. TAG members are encouraged to attend the planting on the 25th and, more important, the Arbor Day ceremony on the 26th, when a selectman will speak and read the Arbor Day Proclamation. A photograph of the event will be necessary for an article to be submitted to the newspaper.

It was noted that Spring Fling is scheduled for April 27 (rain date April 28). Weston Forest and Trail will have a table displaying branch samples of common trees in Weston. The Rotary Club will donate 100 saplings.

4. Tree Warden's Report

Tom noted that among trees lost or taken down 28 percent were pines and 10 percent were red maples. He said gas leaks have been identified in some areas: Wellesley Street (not near tree planting),

Ridgeway and Old Colony roads; and some leaks are being addressed. The recent storm kept the DPW busy, with more than 50 calls. Trees fell on private and public land, power lines came down, and a lot of roads were closed.

The Davey Tree inventory of trees on scenic roads shows phases 1 and 2 completed. After one more year and completion of phase 3, we should have a vision of what the roads should look like.

Tom asked the Burck Company to provide a plan for a streetscape along Ash Street. It could be a demonstration for a master plan for scenic roads. He believes the price is high: \$98,000 (comprising master plan and document: \$52,000; and optional scope: \$46,000). The project could be done all at once or in phases. Burck could be invited to a TAG meeting. Lori said TAG should have a sub group to ask questions about the plan.

Luke noted that he saw the GIS map on the town website: www.mapsonline.net/westonma/. He said it could be expanded to include geological information useful for choosing sites where soil is compatible for tree sustainability.

5. Case Park Update

There are many town projects underway, and Lori suggested obtaining a list of projects and prioritizing those that are relevant to TAG's role. Barbara emphasized the need to complete the Case Park project by the end of June. Nina said it might be necessary to request a postponement.

6. Update on 2019 Town Projects Involving Planting or Removal of Trees

A. Bike Path

Ed reported that blueberries cannot be planted along the trail because there is arsenic there. Also, there is the issue of plant removal with herbicides. More discussion will be needed. Ed suggested that a variety of plants readily available be planted gradually. Barbara noted that small trees planted are less expensive and grow faster and have a better survival rate than large trees. The DCR, Eversource and the MBTA vet planting projects. Stella Lencing is in charge of screening. Nancy Putnam from the DCR is looking into the eco system around the Rail Trail. TAG was asked about trees to save on Merriam and Church streets.

B. New Ash Street Sidewalk

See number 4. Tree Warden's Report.

C. Legacy Trail and New Tree Care on Case Land

Nina noted that the trees replanted for the second time on Case land at Wellesley Street have died. The contract is still active, and she will talk to Michele Grzenda about it.

D. Town Center Project

Special Town Meeting on March 18 will address two issues: renovation of Town Center, and burying of all wires in the center of town on the Boston Post Road.

E. DPW Tree Inventory

See 4. Tree Warden's Report.

F. Case House Reconstruction

Mountain laurels and rhododendrons were removed, and the healthy old hemlock along the path was taken down. Marilyn noted that all trees and shrubs (part of the landscape plan for the library) at the parking lot behind the children's library were taken down when the new Field School was built. Some TAG members said they would like to see landscape plants saved when new projects or renovations are undertaken.

7. Grant Writing Ideas: Lori Hess

Lori reported that Kara Fleming was most helpful, working hand in hand with Lori and John Zaccardi in writing the grant request submitted to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Leon Gaumond was involved, also. Nina thanked John for his immediate response to Lori's call when the application was drafted at the eleventh hour. The Case Park grant proposal, showing a way to handle public spaces, was rejected by the Council because of the number of applications. The Council considered it a great proposal and encouraged TAG to reapply.

8. Renewed Call for Tree By-Law: Susan Luchetti

Susan Luchetti, a resident from Colchester Road, noted that a wooded lot in her neighborhood was clear cut for new construction. She questioned the necessity to take down so many trees and asked for a proposal for a Weston tree by-law. Barbara noted that standard language from existing bylaws from other towns could be used with modifications to suit Weston's needs. It should include public and private lands. The earliest time for submission to Town Meeting of a proposed by-law would be fall, 2019. Tom recommended that a draft of the proposed by-law be submitted to various town departments. It was noted that John Field is land use coordinator. Barbara and Lori volunteered to look into drafting a by-law, and Susan is willing to help.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Doyle