

TREE ADVISORY GROUP
TOWN OF WESTON
MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2019

Present: Nina Danforth, Chair; Kristin Barbieri, Marilyn Doyle, Barbara Fullerton, Lori Hess

Absent: Luke Mcneil, Laura Perry, John Skillman

Guests: Leslie Glynn (Planning Board), John Zaccardi (Parks and Cemetery)

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m.

1. Citizen Comment:

Leslie Glynn commented that Lori did a wonderful job presenting TAG's position on Article 23 at Town Meeting. The scope of the project has changed. Lori said we should have drawings as a reference point for projects to be addressed in the future.

2. Review of Minutes:

There was no review of minutes at this meeting.

3. Arbor Day April 26:

Kristin presented the Arbor Day article from the Town Crier. She said the ceremony went well, "even better than last year." The children were enthusiastic, the Field School principal attended, and Doug Gillespie read the Arbor Day Proclamation. It was noted that red bud (this year's Arbor Day tree) was the favorite tree of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Nina said the choice for Arbor Day tree and other trees to be planted should be determined well in advance. Eversource arborist, Chris Gonzales, said we should have chosen more trees to plant. Nina acted on his comment and went to Weston Nurseries where she chose three Donald Wyman crab apple trees, which were planted on North Avenue. The Eversource crew was very nice and Danny from our DPW was helpful in the planting.

Nina noted that trees planted now are not grown here. Roots are heavily pruned and metal cages are wrapped around inadequate root balls. One tulip tree planted on Newton Street was lost because the metal basket around the root ball was not removed. As was done in the past, TAG members should be present to supervise planting. Nina rejected a defective crab apple tree chosen to replace a failing one at the Library. She went to Weston Nurseries and chose another one, which was planted yesterday. A key for the spigot outside the Library was obtained from the custodian, who volunteered to water the tree during the week. John said the watering truck will be available Friday.

There was a discussion about bare root planting of trees. John related his successful experience with that method in Belmont. It was suggested that TAG might take a look at the method.

4. Spring Fling:

TAG had a beautiful table with the new TAG logo, and small trees donated by the Rotary Club were given to children.

5. Tree By-Law Project—Draft Language: Barbara, Lori

Barbara and Lori have begun research for creation of a tree by-law for the town. Lori is concentrating on storm water management, which will be a key policy in the by-law. She noted problems on Black Oak, Nobscott, and Highland streets, where building of large houses and clear cutting of trees has caused flooding. Man made solutions "are not cutting it." The University of Tennessee Sewer and Water Division was cited as one reference. Ken Calder is the storm water expert at the DPW. Leslie noted that

the Planning Board has its own storm water commissioner. She said Mr. Sweeney, who works for town engineer Steve Fogg, is another source for information. John commented that storm water management is a big issue. Barbara has been thinking about drainage on Ash Street.

There was concern about implementation of the town center plan and its impact on sustainability of existing trees. It was suggested that someone be invited to speak about it. Leslie expressed concern about irrigation provisions for landscape plants in the plan: TAG should look at the plan and ask questions.

Nina announced that she will be stepping down as Chair on June 30, and she will remain in the Group. Kristin and Lori have graciously agreed to be co-chairs starting July 1, 2019. Marilyn thanked Nina for her steadfast leadership at a time when there are challenging issues.

6. Tree Warden's Report:

Tom Cullen could not attend the meeting today, and there was no report.

7. Updates on 2019 Town Projects Involving Trees:

A. Eversource wire clearing project on Merriam Street and other roads:

Tony Nolan (Planning Board) noticed a lot of cut trees on Merriam Street. The Planning Board knew nothing about it. Eversource told him that the cutting had been cleared with Tom Cullen. OSHA has pruning requirements to assure safety of workers in buckets. There was discussion about making a new rule whereby Town Planner, Eversource arborist, Planning Board, and TAG (as well as tree warden and neighbors) would be informed. Tony said Gonzales would talk to the contractor hired by Eversource about the cutting. Tom had contacted Eversource about the cutting on Connecticut Path in Wayland. Chris Gonzales is going to submit a plan for pruning, which includes streets on circuits; the streets in the plan are not necessarily in common areas.

In response to a question about responsibilities of the tree warden, John said responsibilities are spelled out in Chapter 87 of State tree by-law. Karen Fleming can be consulted regarding job description.

B. Legacy Trail and Case Estates Trees Planted in 2017:

Nina said the *Nyssa sylvatica* at Case Park looks good. She observed deer rubbing on the red oak. Five trees there need water, and she recommended that they be fertilized and watered. She will give a tree list to John. Trees will need water from the watering truck now, and water bags should be placed later. A leaning red oak has been straightened. Ropes on American oaks planted at North Avenue in 2017 are too tight: they had been left on too long. Leslie suggested using a biodegradable material and checking trees more often, removing rope earlier in future.

Nina reported that Weston removed a lot of mature butternut and beech trees when Harvard remediated Case land for arsenic contamination. She said the 2017 planting of trees on Wellesley Street did not look good. Michael Harrity said there is no two year warranty

There was a brief discussion about bare root planting of trees. John related his experience in Belmont with this method. Small trees were planted with no subsequent loss of trees. Transportation cost was less, and resident participation was part of the program. It was suggested that TAG might take a look at the program.

C. Case House Reconstruction Meeting with Landscape Architect on Site April 25, 2019:

On site inspection revealed a need for better tree protection. Wraps for winter should come off, fencing around trees should be a minimum of 8 feet, and a clerk of the works should be responsible for oversight.

D. Case Campus Proposed Tree Meeting:

There will be a meeting at Town Hall on Wednesday, June 12 , 7-8 p.m., to inform citizens about a survey of Case Campus, for which the Conservation Commission has engaged the Massachusetts Audubon Ecological Extension Services.

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8. Maple Restoration Project (Hartney Greymont, 2016): Problems with Woodchip Mulch and Blowdowns:

Nina explained that, under supervision of arborist Russell Holman from Hartney Greymnt, Hartney Greymont undertook pruning of the old maple tree allee at the Wellington farm site on Wellesley Street. Holman suggested laying down wood chips, and chips were delivered but they never were spread. The area now has poison ivy, buckthorn, and bittersweet. Nina was informed that Holman no longer is with the company. The Con Com asked who took his place. Would the company follow through to address the problem?

During a February microburst, four giant maple trees snapped off, and pine trees also came down. Could the decaying wood chips have contributed to weakening of the trees? John said they most likely did not contribute to the problem. It was recommended that the chips be removed.

In addition to items discussed on the agenda, Leslie suggested that we look at drawings for the Josiah Smith Tavern project. Nina noted that National Grid has flattened the field behind the Case Estates buildings on Wellesley Street, and the perennial garden has been eliminated. She was told by the Conservation Commission that no herbicides had been used. Also, a large area was covered with black top.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m. The next meeting will be June 12, 2019, 2:30 p.m., at the Department of Public Works.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Doyle

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