

TREE ADVISORY GROUP
TOWN OF WESTON
MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2019

Present: Nina Danforth, Chair; Kristin Barbieri, Marilyn Doyle, Barbara Fullerton, Lori Hess, Ed Recka
Absent: Luke Mcneil, Laura Perry, John Skillman
Guests: Tom Cullen (Tree Warden), John Zaccardi (Parks and Cemetery), citizen Mario Alagna, Rebecca....., Conservation Committee

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. The minutes of May 3 were passed over and the minutes of May 8 were approved. Nina is stepping down as chair, and Marilyn thanked her for her hard work and dedication the past two years.

2. Arbor Day and Spring Plantings:

Kristin reported that the Arbor Day trees looked great. The gator bags were empty, and John said he would look into it. They are filled regularly, and if there is rain they are not filled as often. The tree with a pipe under it at Case Park does not look so well; the crab apple trees planted on North Avenue look great, not so trees planted in earlier years. It was noted that Aria Saunders, a resident on North Avenue, fills bags near her home. There is something wrong with one of the bags there.

3. Ash Street Sidewalk Expansion:

A meeting, to be followed by a site walk on Ash Street, is scheduled for Tuesday, June 18, starting at 11 a.m. A storm water drainage system to replace the existing natural drainage is planned now. Wetlands exist on both sides of the road.

4. Tree By-Law:

Barbara and Lori have a preliminary by-law draft for review and comment by the group. Mr. Alagna (a developer in town as well as a resident) asked about by-laws we are reviewing from other towns. He stated that he believes Wellesley's by-laws are deficient in that they address developers but do not consider residents: sometimes by-laws are not well thought out. In ensuing discussion it was emphasized that owners' and abutters' rights and responsibilities will be taken into consideration, as well as rights and responsibilities of developers.

Lori noted that storm water is an issue, and she and Barbara are addressing that problem. Some topics mentioned were compensation from and to home owners for trees taken down. In depth discussions will take place at forthcoming meetings.

Kristin noted that Concord has just worked on a by-law; and Ed said they have a revolving fund.

Tom said Eversource will supply and plant trees, but they will not donate funds. John mentioned matching grants as a source of funds.

In an aside, Nina mentioned that at a recent meeting the selectmen had questions about what TAG is trying to do. Our mission has evolved, and Lori will meet with newly elected selectman Lauri Bent to discuss and clarify our mission: how it relates to the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Forest and Trail, School Committee, etc. Barbara mentioned education should play an important role in our mission.

5. Tree Warden's Report:

On tree inventory, Tom shared with Eversource arborist Chris Gonzales his data base for tree removal. There remains one more phase to be completed: the south corridor (scenic roads and north

corridor having been completed). Merriam Street has not been completed because of ongoing side walk issues.

Nina wondered if the previous Case Campus inventory conducted by Bartlett Tree has been looked at.

Tom reported that National Grid continues to replace gas lines, and there are drainage problems to be addressed before new roadway construction begins.

Because of other imminent projects, Ash Street is on hold. Ten trees taken down on Concord Road have been replaced with twenty trees.

It was recommended that we develop a plan that can be expanded and developed over years. Implementation of same would encourage support to continue implementation of a streetscape vision.

Tom distributed a list of landscape materials and a plan showing trees: existing, to remain, to be taken down, and to be planted. Eleven or twelve trees are to come down in the center. With lines being placed underground, it is possible to plant more trees than it would have been possible to plant with lines remaining above ground. The landscape architect for the project, Richard Burke, is not enthusiastic about the plan because it is not true to the viewscape vision of the Shurtcliff plan endorsed by the town fathers a hundred years or so ago. Burke is the contact source for landscape part of the Town Center project.

While the planting plan is considered finalized, TAG might take a look at it and express concerns and questions. It will be a while before the planting phase is undertaken.

Rebecca (Conservation Committee) raised a question about the negative practice of mounding dirt or mulch around bases of trees, a practice that contributes to their demise. As an example of the practice, the birches at the Library were noted. The Library employs an outside contractor to maintain the grounds there. There exists no formal education program, and instruction on proper mulching of trees could be part of our education mission. There could be guidelines for the Library, and Ed added that they should be included in the bid process.

The engineering process in Town Center project will be close to two years. There will be an irrigation system supplied by public water source.

6. Town Projects Involving Tree Protection:

Because of time constraints, item 6 was passed over.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m. The next meeting date will be determined to be either July 10 or 17.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Doyle