

TOWN OF WESTON  
TREE ADVISORY GROUP  
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2019  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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

Absent: Luke Mcneil, Laura Perry, John Skillman

Guest: Mario Alagna, Town citizen, developer

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. Lori stated that the position of Parks and Cemetery Superintendent has not been filled to date. The minutes of March 13, May 3, and August 7 were approved.

2. Town Center Improvement Project:

The Town Center Improvement Committee appreciated our suggestions and approved our vote to include the following trees in the plan: 3 New Harmony elm cultivars, 3 Valley Forge elm cultivars, and one tree-form service berry (replacing redbud). Nina expressed concern regarding possible obstruction of the view from Town Hall to the Tavern. Trees for the project have been ordered.

3. Tree By-Law Meeting in October:

Lori stated that a number of committees should be involved, and she would like to invite their members to the October meeting. TAG members advised that a rough draft be composed before inviting committees to a meeting. Barbara and Lori have worked on creating a by-law, and Barbara has dedicated extensive time to working up a draft. Ed suggested that the by-law address only public land and it should address issues such as invasive plants, health, and diversity.

Mr. Alagna said he is working with the Planning Board on a site plan approval process. Regarding a tree by-law, he is concerned about achieving a balance point: property rights vs. the common good. He believes developers are less of a problem because they must conform to the Planning Board requirements; but home owners, especially new residents, cut down trees.

Barbara said Leslie Glynn (Planning Board) has been very helpful in working with her to draft the by-law. Nina stressed we should write a draft first and then invite others for their opinions. Mr. Alagna stated that enforcement of any by-law is most important. It was noted that diameter of a tree has the biggest impact on shade and character. Nina stated that buffers are important. For trees removed, Wellesley charges by inch of tree diameter. Barbara said we need to take the lead on research. Lori will bring up our discussion with Laurie Bent.

4. Mission Discussion:

Lori presented a mission statement as revised by the Board of Selectmen. In essence, TAG can advise committees, and they can take our suggestions as they wish. TAG must work within the processes and forums of committees, boards and departments. If a committee, board or department does NOT move forward with a TAG recommendation that is within their right.

TAG, as a group, may NOT then present our opposition at Town Meeting. TAG members may, however, speak as individuals. Nina noted that our position at Town Meeting did result in reconsideration of the plan for the Ash Street sidewalk project. Barbara said we should be able to make information available to the town.

It was again emphasized that TAG needs the help of an arborist. Ed suggested that a part time arborist (perhaps shared with another town), be hired.

TAG asks that the selectmen make sure that committees notify the Group about projects where trees are involved.

Lori requested that TAG members submit to her comments regarding the Mission Statement before her meeting with Laurie Bent tomorrow morning.

5. Case Park: Project Status, Point Person, Next Steps.

Laura can no longer address the Case Park project, and Ed has kindly agreed to work with Lori to develop a statement of work for a maintenance plan to present to the DPW. Nina said that we should go forward with the proposal presented by Tom Wirth Associates and horticulturalist, Barbara Keane. Following Tom's death, Tom's son, Les, has taken over his father's projects. Nina will send the plant list and plan information to Tom Cullen and Lori.

6. Eversource Walks: Review of August Walks; TAG Participation in September; TAG Action or Follow-up.

Barbara reported on her participation in an Eversource walk. The list of trees noted for removal will be presented to the Planning Board for their approval. Some trees slated for removal are in a "gray" area. Eversource arborist, Chris Gonzales, has been very helpful. The question was raised about Eversource committing to planting new trees. Replacement is not feasible in some areas. Much damage to trees is caused by vehicles and fungal diseases. Lori wondered if some protection around trees could be provided. Some suggestions were training snow plow operators, and leaving a 10 foot high trunk of a dead tree to slow down drivers.

Barbara will join the walk scheduled for Friday. Another walk is scheduled for the following Friday, September 20.

7. New Tree Health Status: Assessment of Trees Planted in Spring; Determine Point Person, Next Steps.

Kristin kindly volunteered to look at the health status of the trees planted last spring. Watering with the watering truck ceased in August, and the watering bags will be removed the end of November. Lori was informed that problems with new trees are not caused by lack of water.

8. Ash Street Sidewalk: Determine Point Person and Next Steps.

Barbara plans to attend a Traffic and Sidewalk Committee meeting scheduled for tonight. She will give a report to Lori.

9. In addition to agenda topics, Barbara said she submitted to Tom Cullen suggestions for the Route 30/Highland Street triangle. After removal of the existing rubble, the long term project will proceed.

It was noted that the scenic vista on Highland Street has been sprayed heavily with herbicide. The person engaged to do the spraying should be advised to take more care, and Lori will mention it to Laurie Bent.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, at 10:00 a.m., Department of Public Works.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Doyle