

16 JUN 2012 PM 10:55  
TOWN CLERK  
GREAT BARRINGTON

## Tree Committee

April 4, 2012, Mason Library

Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Beth Moser, Hilda Shapiro, Steve Adams, Jonathan Hankin, Judith Dillon, Maria Ahin and Lisa Bozzuto. Tree Warden Michael Peretti attended. Committee members Michael Wise and Craig Okerstorm-Lang were absent. Robert Hoogs, Dale Abrams (president of Great Barrington Land Conservancy) and Tim Geller (Construct) attended the meeting to offer a presentation on the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

Motion to approve minutes from meeting March 7 2012 was approved.

### I. New Business

#### A. CPA presentation:

The Community Preservation Act is a tool to help communities create a fund to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing and develop outdoor recreation facilities. Some of the advantages of this Act are that it helps to preserve unique community characteristics, advance sustainable development and protect farmland and open spaces.

42% of MA towns have adopted CPA, including Williamstown, Stockbridge, Lenox and Beckett in the Berkshires.

Local adoption of CPA requires Town Meeting approval and ballot vote approval.

If passed, CPA establishes a surcharge on local property taxes (1-3%). There is an optional exemption for the first \$100,000 on property value, as well as exemptions for low income residents and low to moderate income seniors. Calculation estimates for a Great Barrington home owner with a home assessed at \$374,533 and a CPA rate of 3%, the surcharge would be \$108/year.

State matching funds are guaranteed.

How has CPA helped other Berkshire county towns?

Stockbridge purchased 57 acres of open space near Botanical Gardens, additional units in Pinewoods Housing and restoration work on historic Chime Tower.

Lenox : predevelopment for affordable housing in Sawmill Brook Townhouses, and funds for public library.

Funds can be used for projects such as land purchase, easement purchase, protection of drinking water and wetlands, restoring polluted sites to natural state and protection of wildlife habitat. In Great Barrington, funds could be used for the Fairgrounds under the open space-recreation categories. New England Log Home site would also be eligible for funding.

Historic preservation funds can be used to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate or restore historic units. Outdoor recreation funds can be used for active and/or passive recreation, community gardens, trails for walking, hiking biking, parks and playgrounds.

Why now?

- Important town projects could be funded with state help.
- Substitute funding for municipal capital projects.
- Guaranteed annual state distribution (25-100%match).
- Strengthen community bond rating.

More information: [communitypreservation.org](http://communitypreservation.org)

## B. Arbor Day Initiatives:

Ideas included:

- Tree walk through town

- Ask local artists to paint/sketch trees (Hilda Shapiro)

- Scavenger hunt with winner receiving a tree donated by Ward's

- Mulching demonstration

- Free trees from TreesPlease site (Lisa Bozzuto and Judith Dillon)

- Plant a tree at Town Hall playground (Mike Peretti will check on this)

- Prune elm at Housatonic Housidome (Steve Adams)

Beth Moser will write a press release of events for newspaper.

## C. Contract for Tree Care Language

This would devise guidelines for homeowners for tree care. Steve Adams brought samples of brochures from ISA. This may be an opportunity for educational display. Committee agrees that it is important to provide information prior to new trees being planted, because about half of the trees will not be on town property. Committee representatives may be dispersed to educate about the trees being planted and ask homeowners to adopt and care for trees.

Most of the new trees will be planted where trees have been lost. Discussion regarding having a workshop for people who will be getting trees.

Cooperative Extension may be a source for free tree care information.

## II. Old Business

### A. Gilmore Ave update:

Dennis Gibbons and Steve Adams walked Gilmore Ave to assess tree conditions. Informal assessment went to Joe Sokul and Mike Peretti. The recommendation is that the tree canopy should remain, but there is work to be done on many of the trees. Mike Peretti can ask that the town to prioritize work at this street at the start of the new fiscal year. Hazard branches should be removed. The cabled Norway maple is in bad shape and should be considered for future removal. Proposal is to move sidewalk to the other side of the street.

## III. General

### A. Educational ideas: For tree selection, help people determine

- how to select a healthy tree;

- how to transplant a tree;

- determining the right tree for the right site.

Dennis Gibbons and Lisa Bozzuto will work on display. Beth Moser can laminate materials.

B. ITree seminar. This was not attended by any committee member. It is archived for review

C. Beth Moser announced that Jess Wikle has been approved as a new member of the committee.

D. Discussion regarding whether to take a break from committee work over the summer.

Members present agree to work through summer months with as many members attending as are

able.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58pm

Michael D. W. -  
6 June 2012