

Tree Committee

July 11, 2012, Mason Library

Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Beth Moser, Steve Adams, Judith Dillon, Maria Ahlin, Lisa Bozzuto, Michael Wise, Jess Wikle, Hilda Shapiro and Susan Sheridan (alternate).

I. Minutes from the meeting June 6, 2012 were approved without objection.

II. Old Business

A. National Grid tree installation

Gibbons observed that there is no provision for watering; this is a concern in the recent dry conditions. There should have been some provision in the contract for this. The low bidder came in \$10K below the others; this out of town firm could not have bid that low if follow-up watering had been part of the bid specs. Gibbons did some watering himself. The flowering committee in Housatonic is watering the trees there (and a volunteer is taking care of the one at the post office, where the official has been particularly unpleasant to deal with). Steve thought it should have been put off until the fall; Beth pointed out that we had to meet a deadline to commit and spend the money. DPW representatives were on hand for the plantings, but nonetheless some of the trees have issues and the plantings were not all well done. The contract should have called for arborist supervision. Gibbons has notes on the quality and structural issues. Wise suggested that concerns might be transmitted through Mike Piretti; Joe Sokul is responsible for the bidding process and the contract.

III. New Business

A. Tree City USA designation

Lisa Bozzuto gave a presentation about this program, which is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation. Some benefits: it provides a framework for taking action; it raises the image of the issue (and may help in getting funding in competitive conditions); it may help raise funds. There are four standards: a tree board or department; a tree-care ordinance (what we have it probably too simple: the ordinance must give the tree board or department the responsibility for an annual community forest work plan, with clear guidance for planting, maintaining and removing trees from streets, parks and other public places); a community forestry program with a budget at least \$2 per capita; Arbor Day observance. The town manager is supportive of the idea; he has served in other cities that had the designation. Wise will check how much formality would be needed for an "ordinance" that would meet the program's standards. Lisa will check with Mike Piretti to identify how much of the checklist is already in the town bylaw or other guidance.

B. Membership

Gibbons noted that Craig Okerstrom-Lang's term on the committee has ended, and he decided not to stay. Gibbons and Dillon are now on new terms. Sheridan is willing to be a full member. Moran suggested recruiting some local tree professionals, as regular members or alternates.

IV. Next meeting will be August 1, 2012

V. The chair adjourned the meeting without objection at 6:00.

