

Tree Committee

October 3, 2012, Mason Library

Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Beth Moser, Maria Ahlin, Lisa Bozzuto, Michael Wise, Jess Wikle, Steve Adams and Hilda Shapiro.

I. Minutes from the meeting of Sept 5, 2012 were approved without objection.

II. Old Business

A. Review of Tree Committee resolution

Gibbons pointed out the points in the Select Board resolution describing the committee's responsibilities, to propose a committee work plan. It calls for the committee to review the town's public tree inventory; because that does not exist, the committee needs to create it. That could be a project for the winter, after some members attend the "tree steward" program. The second item, developing a maintenance program, would follow from the inventory. Bozzuto recalled that the town budget is small; Gibbons thought it would nonetheless be a good project, to set a target. Third, modifications to the inventory, will follow from the inventory and the discussion of trees of significance; it could lead to grants for planting. Educational programs are a priority for Susan Sheridan; other suggestions are also welcome. The tree list for the town's bylaws was a principal reason for the committee's creation. The Tree City designation (with the necessary ordinance and bylaw) is in the works, hoping for action at the next Town Meeting.

B. Approval of tree list (do not plant list)

We have been working toward a "do not plant" list; it would be good to have some positive suggestions, too. The "do not plant" list would include invasives. Adams warned that location matters too; a recommended tree should not be planted in the wrong place. The "list" would include considerations about appropriate planting. Gibbons will work on a list, with Adams. This is to be coordinated with DPW, the tree warden and the Parks Commission. A regular contact with the Parks Commission would be valuable, to deal with tree issues on park land.

C. Draft tree ordinance, for discussion

Gibbons noted that DPW's initial reaction to the proposed role of the tree warden was cautious. It should begin with the current job description. Gibbons will contact DPW and the town manager to be sure that the committee is still in the lead preparing this draft. The ordinance ought to recommend that contracts for planting include maintenance obligations and advice about timing (that is, don't plant in the summer). Requiring a proportion of the tree committee to be qualified professionals should be in the ordinance, if not in an amended resolution.

III. New Business

A. Trees of significance

A listing of important trees should be developed to increase public awareness. A tree could be considered significant if it is large, historically important or unusual in this area. Members are encouraged to take note, and photos, to compile this listing. That could go on the committee's website, with the pictures. It might support designation of "heritage" or significant trees for protection under an ordinance.

IV. General

A. Urban tree steward seminar, Oct. 19-20

This program, in Petersham, is for tree wardens, parks commissioners, tree committee members and town staff that work on trees. It costs \$55; registration is due by October 10. Gibbons is considering attending if he can line up funding; others are encouraged.

B Education-outreach

Adams suggested collaboration with Greenagers, maybe even recruiting someone there for the committee. Further discussion will continue at a future meeting; ideas are encouraged. Ahlin suggested tying something into the library's showing of *The Lorax* on October 25.

IV. Next meeting will be November 7, 2012.

V. The chair adjourned the meeting without objection at 6:43.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael D. J. E.", written in black ink.