

Tree Committee

July 10, 2013, Mason Library

I. Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:15. pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Beth Moser, Lisa Bozzuto, Michael Wise, Jess Wikle, Maria Ahlin, Hilda Shapiro, Laurie Epstein and Steve Adam. Absent: Susan Sheridan, tree warden Michael Piretti.

II. Draft minutes from the meeting of May 1, 2013 were approved without objection.

III. Old business

A. Tree inventory

Gibbons reported that he and Molly Freilitzer put in a day, accompanied by an intern in the town planner's office. They started at the south end of the Main Street reconstruction project, on the east side (where all the trees are going to be removed), and on the other side, from the rail trestle, doing town hall and the gazebo area. They are working out the kinks. After some trial, they determined to note pest infestation only if it is likely to be harmful, for example, and they noted the need for crown maintenance. In the rear of town hall, they noted the important trees, like sugar maples, but not all the stems of the profusion of Norway maples. It took most of a day (10 until 3). They considered how this could be done as a school project. Bozzuto asked whether the town is likely to do the things that the inventory shows should be done. Gibbons responded that the inventory will give the tree warden information for setting priorities. They did not inventory the St. James sugar maple, because it is not a town tree; Adams noted that a "heritage tree" could be one on private property, and it was agreed that inventorying those in this program would be a good idea. Gibbons will not have much time for this over the summer; Molly is willing to come help if someone else can proceed with it. The data can be taken on any smartphone; the app is free.

B. Adoption of Official tree list

The town planner has inquired about the status of the tree list. Epstein moved that the tree list the committee had discussed and reviewed be adopted; seconded by Wise; voted unanimously.

C. Tree City USA award presentation

Gibbons showed the committee the plaque designating Great Barrington as a tree city, the new flag, and the two signs to be placed along the main roads into town. Gibbons will deliver the signs to Joe Sokul, who will have DPW put them up.

D. National Grid tree replacements update

Gibbons reported that several of them have died: an oak on Park Street, an oak on North Plain Road, an oak at the Water Department, and perhaps one other. Joe Sokul is in contact with the contractor about replacements; Gibbons will followup to be sure that is done (or that the town is reimbursed). Adams and Gibbons have removed the stakes from the survivors.

IV. New business

A. Forest stewardship

Bozzuto had heard a presentation about the DCR program that encourages forest management. The next filing deadline is about 6 months away. Previously, the program was for individuals; now, towns forest lands can be covered. Adams reported on his experience with these forest management plans in Otis, and Epstein reported on her experience with her property in Monterey. The minimum area covered is 8 acres. For private owners, follow-through is encouraged by tax incentives. It requires a long-term management plan. Wikle had done some work on a plan for McAllister, which is managed by the Conservation Commission. Bozzuto is on the Conservation

Commission and will inquire about their interest. The other significant town forest is the Lake Mansfield area. Adams noted that for these areas, the most significant issue is dealing with invasive species.

B. Main Street

The Select Board is holding a public session about the Main Street project next Tuesday. Gibbons will be away. Epstein will be there; Gibbons encouraged anyone else who was on the Committee when the Main Street plan was reviewed to attend.

C. Upcoming agenda ideas

Bozzuto suggested having Sean Girard, from the trail conservancy, talk to the Committee about how climate change may be affecting the rhythm of tree development here.

D. The next meeting will be August 7, 2013.

V. The chair adjourned the meeting without objection at 5:57 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael D. Adams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text of the meeting minutes.