

Tree Committee

October 1, 2014, Mason Library

I. Chairman Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Lisa Bozzuto, Hilda Banks Shapiro, Beth Moser, Maria Ahlin, Jess Wikle and Michael Wise. Absent: Laurie Epstein, Susan Sheridan, and tree warden Michael Piretti. Also present: Selectboard member Ed Abrahams, Steve Adams, and three representatives from St. James Place, including Sally and Fred Harris.

II. There were no minutes from the scheduled meeting of August 6, 2014, because there was no quorum then. Minutes of the meeting of July 9, 2014 will be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

III. Old business

A. DCR grant tree permission from private owners

Bozzuto reported that we are ready to submit the notice of intent. The minimum grant is \$1000, which must be matched. The grant would cover planting 10 to 12 trees and three years of maintenance. The committee reviewed the draft letter, which is in general terms. A map needs to be added. The actual grant application would have more detail about how the funds would be applied. The committee discussed who to approach for donations of trees and time to match the grant. Gibbons and Bozzuto will collaborate about final drafting. The deadline we are now facing is May 2015, for a project that would be done in spring 2016.

B. Main Street tree care

Steve Adams is the arborist-consultant for DOT on the Main Street project. Gibbons noted that after recent experience with overly aggressive removals and pruning along Main Street, not connected with the construction project, he is concerned that tree work will not be done carefully enough. In an early step on the Main Street project, when a Norway maple was removed at the corner of Taconic and Main Street, a large red oak was also pruned, too high, without advising the arborist-consultant. On the plan, that oak is to be retained, but there is no instruction about particular protection for it. The committee is concerned that the arborist should be consulted not just about work around those trees that the plan designates for special attention and protection, but also about other significant work related to removing, planting or maintaining trees in the plan area.

C. Tree City USA 2014

Bozzuto reported that the plaque is now in place. The application for next year should be done in December. Gibbons observed that this can be done on-line and should be straightforward. He will check with the tree warden about enforcement of the tree ordinance.

D. Amended language for Tree Committee resolution

Gibbons proposed to ask the change the number of members, which is now set at 11, to seven, and in the phrase about staggered terms, change the two "4s" to "2s". On motion by Wise, seconded by Moser, the committee voted unanimously to ask the Selectboard to so amend the resolution creating the committee.

IV. New business

A. St. James maples

St. James Place needs to bring a crane onto the property, and it cannot come up the driveway, so a small red oak tree on the corner would have to be removed in order to move the crane without disturbing the root system of the sugar maple. This oak is a town tree, and it is not one that the

Main Street plan calls for removing. Fred Harris said they had talked with Joe Sokul, who said he would talk with the Main Street contractor about the construction schedule. That group agreed to permit removing the tree, although the town manager asked that this idea be run by the tree committee. Adams and Gibbons suggested digging up the tree and healing it in temporarily, and then replanting it after the crane was no longer needed. Harris said they would look into whether this is feasible, and if it is easy enough they will consider it. Gibbons noted that digging it up and having it die would not make sense. Adams was concerned that checking about underlying utilities would be a worry, if it were dug up. Harris said the first choice would be to leave it; second, check out the tree spade-transplant option; third, leave it there and try to work around. Harris said there would be no risk to the sugar maple. The Committee urged St. James Place to get professional advice about the feasibility of transplanting the red oak, and requested that, if it would not be feasible to transplant it and thus it needs to be removed, that it be replaced after the work is done with a like kind tree.

B. National Grid follow-up

The committee discussed the continued frustration in getting Arello to make good on the guarantee, and with DPW for not following up.

V. General

A. The next meeting will be November 5, 2014.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.


Michael Wise