MINUTES

Forest Advisory Committee

16 May 2017 6:30 PM

Library Conference Room

Members present: Steve Gulrich, chair, Debbie Abbot, Steve LaBranche, Mike Harnett, Henry Lind (seving as clerk)

Staff present: Dave Johnson

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gulrich at 6:35

The minutes of February 27 2017 were reviewed. Debbie moved approval as presented, Steve LaBranche seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

The Committee welcomed Dave Johnson as staff assistant with the note that he had attended the work session at Wiley Park as an introduction. His interest in the project had subsequently led him to request assignment to the project as his background education was with forest conservation at the University of Massachusetts.

The committee wished to recognize Mike O’Connor for his years of service and enthusiastically welcomed Dave.

FRIENDS REPORT

Debbie reported that the Friends had mapped the swamp maple and staked the locations for the planting of shad on April 13 together with Natural Resources staff.

It was reported that 10 Shad plants were installed on May 13 in the vicinity of the pond shore. Steve Gulrich reported locating 12 blueberry plants that had been planted in 2009 with one being deceased.

INVENTORY REPORT

Steve Gulrich distributed new tags which will detail the species, ID number, and date planted. They will be attached to a piece of reinforcing steel (rebar) which will be located 2 ft on the west side of each planting.

Discussion about the data entry portal as it is being used ensued with respect to evaluation and revisions which would make it more user friendly.

* Having a dropdown for tree ID might be explored.
* When a photo is taken of an individual planting it should be not taken from above the plant but rather straight on at the height of the plant to prevent perspective skewing.
* A procedure to check data entry after new plantings should be implemented to insure correct entry.
* Some data points are not being correctly mapped
* Add a check mark for those new plantings which include a driWater tube
* Will confirm that the date of inspection will be included in the tree inspection report
* Will try to resolve the inaccuracy of the GPS with some tablets and hand entry of latitude and longitude could introduce errors. ECF land manager Andrew Bagnara may be of assistance in this regard.

Inventory scheduling will be an ongoing project to insure that the plantings are evaluated on a regular basis. Those plantings which were recommended for abandonment will not need to be part of the inventory.

UPDATE AND AMEND

The updated plant list is now visible in the data collection dropdown.

It was noted that various changes to handbook need to be noted for the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission. This includes the new planting summary, current maps and the handbook.

It was noted that the Wintergreen plantings experienced low survival but it could be attributed to the dry summer conditions of 2016

OLD BUSINESS

There was not a great deal of activity in terms of invasives removal.

The Town Admininstrator advised Steve Gulrich to continue with another 3 year term in light of the scarcity of new applicants. Steve LaBranche indicated he had not yet been informed as to the status of his appointment renewal. Henry was expecting to have a renewal notice.

NEW BUSINESS

There was discussion about the application of mycorrhizal fungi to new plantings as a tool to encourage the plant’s adaptation to transplanting. Henry had attended a lecture regarding the care and feeding of trees in urban settings where the soils were not necessarily well augmented or fertile. The presenter strongly encouraged the use of this product to enhance survival and vigor. Steve LaBranche indicated that his firm does use an application of this in their plantings.

When Henry contacted Russ Norton regarding this topic his suggestion was that it provided more benefit on bare root plantings rather than established (where it could be applied to

Proposal was introduced to do both experimental applications of mycorrhizal fungi to new plantings as well as controls (no application) to determine the effectiveness of the material. The application would be noted on the inventory software. A limited application with experimental and controlled sites would be used around a few of established plants

The topic of DriWater pellets directly to the soil when there are new plantigs was discussed. It was decided to confer with islands group for availability of supplier of these pellets.

Henry made a motion to add the above experimental application of mycofungal products to the handbook for future plantings. Steve seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

The Fall planting will need review of specifications of possible additional species being planted in order to make a final decision

Black Huckleberry will be the primary Fall planting. Mike will look at new species on the list and research for additional items. The new list will be sent to Mike for his review.

Sylvan Nurseries will be contacted for the acquisition of the plants.

NESXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting was set at 28 September 2017

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Lind