

Tree Committee

October 2, 2013, Mason Library

I. Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:18. pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Lisa Bozzuto, Hilda Shapiro, Michael Wise, Jess Wikle Steve Adams, Beth Moser, and Susan Sheridan, Absent: Maria Ahlin, and Laurie Epstein, and tree warden Michael Piretti.. Also present: John Marewer.

II. Draft minutes from the meeting of September 4, 2013 were approved without objection.

III. Old business

A. Grove St. Park tree replacement

Gibbons and Bozzutto checked the site. Gibbons observed that it would be important to maintain open space. There is playground equipment which should remain in the open. A shade tree, in New England style, such as an oak, maple or tulip, could be put near the Dickey Mory memorial maple (not where the tree had been taken out). Tom had suggested a hemlock or Norway spruce; Gibbons is leaning more toward an oak like several others already there. Magruder called attention to DPW removal of scrub trees and a white pine in the west corner about three years ago; that area has not been cleaned up. Magruder noted generally that relative responsibilities about trees are not clear, among the Parks Commission, cemetery managers, tree warden, DPW and others. Some think anything done in a park requires public notice and hearing. Gibbons concurred, noting that the Parks Commission has authority about parks, not the tree warden. The particular tree that was cut down was the act of an employee acting beyond his authority. But it was not a street tree, under the tree warden's jurisdiction. Gibbons is not sure whether Article 87 covers parks. Adams noted that standing dead trees and hazard trees can be removed without notice. It would be good to make the protocol clear. Magruder said that Sokul told him there should have been a notice and hearing.

B. National Grid tree replacements

Gibbons has not heard from Sokul. Gibbons will talk with the town manager about how to put pressure on the contractor to replace the three dead ones. Gibbons has been checking the others; one elm in Housatonic should get some attention, and a crabapple by the post office.

C. DCR grant

Lisa reported on what she and Ahlin had learned about what other towns do. They are waiting to hear from the Amherst tree committee. Northampton has a fund to support planting; citizens can make tax deductible contributions. Lexington has a program. Many rely on donations from nurseries. Checking town websites revealed that many tree committees receive regular reports from the town tree warden. The first step toward getting a DCR grant is submitting a statement of intent, and that requires deciding what we are applying for. Bozzutto proposed that we do the inventory first to see what we have, before deciding what to apply for. Gibbons thought that getting matching funds to support doing an inventory professionally would be a good step. It took five hours to do the south end of Main Street. Moser recalled that she has \$450 in an account that could be applied to this. The minimum grant is \$1000; we would have to raise another \$550 to qualify. A possible object of a grant would be doing an inventory of the arboretum at the high school; Gibbons thought that more plantings would not be needed there, since many had just gone in, though they might need some care (watering, developmental pruning). This will be discussed again at the next meeting.

D. Tree Committee resolution

Gibbons met with the town manager. Many tasks on the resolution have now been done: the tree

list, the Tree City application. We could improve the bylaw. Of greater concern is the makeup: it calls for 11 and alternates, but we now have 10 and no alternate. Wise noted that an efficient size is about 5, though a consultative committee could be larger. Some other towns have smaller committees. If we want to change, we should send a letter to the Selectboard about changing the resolution. Wise suggested phrasing the resolution in terms of the minimum number of members, thus allowing us to shrink by attrition without the need for separate resolution each time it changes.

IV. New business

A. Tree City USA signs

V. The next meeting will be November 6, 2013. The principal agenda item will be plans for the tree inventory.

VI. The chair adjourned the meeting without objection at 6:11 PM.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. J." with a stylized flourish at the end.