

Tree Committee

June 6, 2012, Mason Library

Chair Dennis Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:22 pm. Present were members Dennis Gibbons, Beth Moser, Steve Adams, Judith Dillon, Maria Ahlin, Lisa Bozzuto, Michael Wise, Jess Wikle, and Susan Sheridan (alternate).

Minutes from the meeting May 2, 2012 were approved without objection.

I. Old Business

A. National Grid tree installation

Gibbons had been waiting for a week to hear about the beginning of this planting. Joe Sokul said today that the paperwork is in order and planting should start this week or next; in fact, Mike Peretti notified him later that the planting began today, off Quarry Street and along East St. Arello has the contract. Gibbons checked the work after the crew had left on Park St. The oak is the right size but not the best branching structure. The Sargent cherries look decent. The crew had a watering truck along, and so it looks like they are taking care of that step. Next up will be Castranova Park. The sites have been marked with stakes, with the species noted on them.

For advising abutters about tree care, Hilda is still willing to do the missionary work, and Judy will drive her around. Mike Peretti also said he would talk with abutters (and at a recent meeting he reported that he had already talked with some, notably along South St.). Dennis will meet with Mike tomorrow to co-ordinate this, and he will send out a group e-mail with guidance. Brochures are in hand; Steve Adams obtained them (and paid for them himself: \$72.70, at \$12 per pack plus shipping). The subjects: Benefits of Trees (probably particularly appropriate for this purpose), New Tree Planting, Proper Mulching Techniques, Recognizing Tree Risk, Why Topping Hurts Trees. Other, more technical brochures from ISA are aimed at arborists.

Using the town's reverse 911 system to notify the abutters about the new trees would probably not be efficient. But the Committee might consider using that outlet for other public outreach later. For the approximately 17 sites at issue here, direct personal (and perhaps phone) contact would be best.

The National Grid project bids came in low, so some funds might remain, perhaps to reimburse for the brochures.

II. New Business

A. Review & revise recommended tree list for Great Barrington

Gibbons explained that the Committee had been asked to review and revise the town's list of recommended trees, which is referenced in a zoning bylaw provision, Section 6.2.4, about landscaping. The bylaw says this list is of "appropriate" trees, not ruling out others.

No items on the current list look inappropriate. There are some redundancies, but they are not problematic. Steve Adams suggested items that might be added: Callery pear, ginkgo, honey locust, Cornelian cherry (*cornus mas*), tree lilac, elm (disease resistant). Judy suggested adding shingle oak.

III. Other new business

A. Target date for tree inventory

Molly has been inquiring about scheduling this. Gibbons could not get to it until September. He suggested working with Molly on a small, defined area to see how it works, and then continue with it ourselves. The iTree software looks good; perhaps it will be available for the Mac by then.

B. Arbor Day project followup

Gibbons tried to put an Arbor Day thank-you into the Shoppers Guide, but it has not appeared yet. He will thank Windy Hill, Ward's and Haupt directly; Hilda might be willing to thank some others. There is only one entrant for the free tree (Luke Prima); the Committee agreed that he should get it.

C. Possible amendment to resolution

Adams suggested a formal requirement that the Committee membership include at least four people who are certifiable experts in the field, with a degree or experience in a relevant discipline. Beth will write to the Town Manager requesting that the Select Board consider this change.

D. Time management at meetings

Adams observed that presentations or participation by non-members have taken considerable time at recent meetings. The Committee will consider whether some protocol is needed to control these interventions better.

E. Outreach ideas

Moser suggested that the Committee consider organizing a tree walk to expand public awareness. We might even ask David Rutstein to add some bits about trees to his historical walks. We should also collaborate with other groups, like the cemetery and parks committees, who should be interested in the town's public tree resources.

The chairman adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 6:43pm. The next meeting will be on July 11, 2012.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.