

## **MINUTES: ROCKINGHAM TREE COMMITTEE**

**DATE: MAY 2, 2016**

**PRESENT: ELLEN HOWARD, JOHN MIDURA, RAY PERRY, POLLY THOMPSON**

The meeting convened at 4:07 PM.  
Ellen will continue to act as temporary chair.

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. Minutes**

The minutes of April 4, 2016 were unanimously approved.

#### **2. Caring for Canopy Tree Planting Grant 2015 – Update**

Thanks to our town Tree Fund and a matching grant from the state, we will be planting trees this month.

Ellen, Polly, and Alma Beals visited Maple Hill Nursery and tagged seven crabapple trees, *Malus* ‘Prairifire’ and ‘Adams’, for planting in late May. Four will be planted at the north end of Green ST, and three will be planted on South ST. Ray will mark water lines and ask Rob Wheeler to mark sewer lines. Ray is to ask Mike Hines to contact Dig Safe to check the sites, and the trees will be installed by Maple Hill.

Ellen will write a press release to let the public know when the trees will be planted. The state grant requires a report on the project, so we will be taking pictures during the installation.

Watering of the newly planted trees will be the key to their long-term survival. Polly and John, with the help of a water tank purchased with tree funds, will make sure that the trees get their weekly soaking.

#### **3. Island Park – GMP Replacement Tree**

Green Mountain Power has provided the money to pay for the planting of a tree in one of the parking lot jut-outs. The money is already in the Tree Fund. Ellen and Polly chose an ornamental pear, *Pyrus calleryana* ‘Cleveland Select’, for this site. Maple Hill Nursery will install the tree in late May.

#### **4. Atkinson Street – GMP Replacement Trees – “Elms for Atkinson.”**

Green Mountain Power will pay for two replacement trees to be planted on Atkinson ST. Ellen, Polly, and Alma think the sites are appropriate for elm trees. Elms are in short supply right now, so the planting will be postponed until 2017.

The Tree Committee would like to see more than two elms planted on Atkinson. To this end, we are going to start a project called “Elms for Atkinson”. We will identify all the possible elm sites on Atkinson and then raise funds to pay for the trees. We invite anyone with an interest in elms to join us.

#### **5. Island Park – River Valley Tech Pruning**

On May 11 and 12, students from River Valley Tech will be pruning trees in Island Park. They will focus on the center island trees, and the crabapple near the pump station. Mike Hines will be contacted about closing the lot. Public Works will assist with removal of debris. John and Robert McBride will work on possible filming of the event.

## **6. Care of the Urban Forest Project Update**

Rockingham was invited to participate in the Care of the Urban Forest Project, a Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program (VT UCF) grant that has three parts: an inventory of public trees, the development of a maintenance plan, and the training of tree care participants.

We are ready to schedule our training session, and have come up with a couple of ideas for a workshop: 1. how to repair a tree that has been damaged by improper pruning, and 2. how to assess a hazard tree. Public Works will be participating, and will select the topic and date for the event. The state will offer training (and free lunch) for up to ten participants.

## **7. Tree Committee Status**

Currently there is no municipal staffing of the Tree Committee. In order to continue the planting and maintenance of Rockingham's urban forest, the Tree Committee needs a municipal staff member. The Committee will prepare a memo for presentation to the Selectboard that will explain what the Tree Committee has accomplished in the last 20 years. The Selectboard will then decide whether the Tree Committee will be assigned municipal staffing.

The Tree Committee has two projects in the works. The first is "Elms for Atkinson", and the second is the planting of Henry ST. The state's Urban and Community Forestry Program will be back to full funding next year, and the Tree Committee wants to be ready to take advantage of their programs. To do so, we need to have a municipal staff member who will apply for state funds.

## **8. Other**

**Tree Maintenance:** The town budget has \$2,500 to spend on tree maintenance before July 1. Ray will make a list of trees that need work. The general pruning of the crabapples on Green ST will not be on this list, as that project will be saved for the River Valley Tech students.

**Pruning Policy:** In light of the recent damage done to public trees by improper pruning, the Tree Plan will include a pruning policy for the town as a component of the Care of the Urban Forest Project. For example, the town should be notified in advance of any pruning that will be done by utilities, and the town will monitor the pruning to make sure that proper work is done. The policy will also remind homeowners, landlords, and tenants that they may not prune public trees.

**Publicity:** John has offered the use of Windham Antiques as a spot to hold Tree Committee events that publicize our projects. John is interested in finalizing a design for the Henry ST planting. Now that the water line work has been finished, the plan for installing tree bump-outs on Henry can proceed. A tentative layout was developed in 2015 by students from BFUHS, and will be used as a starting point. This project will include discussions between the Tree Committee, Municipal Manager, Town Highway and Selectboard.

Next Tree Committee meeting: June 6

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Compiled by:  
Polly Thompson  
Tree Committee member