

MINUTES: ROCKINGHAM TREE COMMITTEE

DATE: September 12, 2016

PRESENT: ELLEN HOWARD, RAY PERRY, CASS WRIGHT, ALMA BEALS, ROBERT McBRIDE, BETSY BRADEN, POLLY THOMPSON, ANDREA URBANO of Vermont Urban and Community Forestry

The meeting convened at 4:00 PM.
Ellen will be the temporary chair.

Agenda Items

1. Care of the Urban Forest Project – Management Plan

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 management plan, and the training of tree care participants.

Andrea Urbano of VT UFC had attended our April 2016 Tree Committee meeting to discuss what we would want to include in a management plan. She prepared a draft of a plan and sent it to the Committee in advance of the September 12 meeting. Andrea returned to our September meeting and conducted a page-by-page review of the plan in order to prepare a final draft. She will have the draft ready in a week, and will send copies to Ellen and Polly.

In order to help Andrea finish the plan, Ellen will arrange for a printable copy of the Rockingham logo to be sent to Andrea, and Polly will send her a copy of the 1998 Tree Plan.

2. Care of the Urban Forest Project – Technical Training

Our training session has been scheduled for October 13, from 10 AM to 1:30 PM. It will focus on pruning and hazard tree assessment. Polly will send an email to Elise Schrader to confirm the topics. Rockingham has space for up to 10 participants. We will need a final head count.

3. Caring for Canopy Tree Planting Grant

Polly gave a report of this year's tree planting. The town contracted with Maple Hill Nursery to plant four Adams crabapples, three Prarifire crabapples, and one Cleveland Select pear. The trees were planted in early June. The Adams were infested with a borer, and will be replaced by Maple Hill Nursery in October. The Prairifires, which arrived with thin crowns, are filling out. The pear is doing well.

The planting of the trees did not uniformly meet current standards. Some of them were set too deep (root flare below ground level), and there were metal cages left in place. Polly will contact Maple Hill before the October planting to ask for proper planting guidelines to be followed when the new trees are installed.

The trees were paid for by the Tree Fund and a matching Caring for Canopy Grant from the state. Ellen reported that the Maple Hill bill has been paid, and the town has received the grant money from the state. The Tree Fund now contains \$6,662.80. This includes a payment of \$350 to replace a tree killed by a contractor.

3. Alan Fowler's request for a tree planting in Memorial Park

The Windham Hotel has a parking lot that is located next to Memorial Park. As drivers pull into the lot they are driving over the property line and running over the edge of the park. Alan Fowler has offered to pay to have a tree planted right next to the line on the Memorial Park side in order to direct traffic into the lot. While waiting to plant a tree this fall, the town installed a large post to keep traffic out of the park. Now that the post has been in place for a few months, Polly will check with Alan to find out if he still wants to plant a tree in place of the post, or has decided that the post is sufficient for directing traffic.

4. Tree Planting for 2017

Ellen said that state grant funding information is not yet available for 2017.

Atkinson ST: Green Mountain Power has offered to pay for the planting of two trees on Atkinson ST. Ellen will contact the company to ask about the funds.

School ST: Now that the water line work is done, the Tree Committee can select planting locations on School ST. Ray pointed out that there are a number of old maples near the west end that are in decline.

Henry ST: The Tree Committee is moving forward with the development of a planting plan for Henry ST. Polly will search for the 2015 plan that was made by the Envirothon students, as the Committee needs to have a plan on paper in order to start. This will be a big endeavor that will take place in stages, the first being the development of the planting sites on a street that lacks greenbelts. Ellen will speak with Chip about the creation of bump-outs using granite curbing salvaged from other town projects. If the granite is available for Henry ST, Ray will investigate the stock pile that is located at the Water Department.

5. Tree Removals and Pruning

Ray reported that the following trees are going to be taken down: two Lindens on Green ST, three pines on Griswold Drive, and a tree near the fire station in Saxtons River.

Ray hired All Seasons Tree Service to prune a tree outside the police station in Bellows Falls. The tree had communication lines running through it and power lines at its top. All Seasons was able to show that with proper pruning a tree could be made to be compatible with utility lines without being disfigured. Ray will use this tree as a demonstration of how to preserve the natural beauty of our public trees while assisting the work of the utility companies.

6. Other Business

1. The Committee hopes to develop closer working relationships with utility companies in order to save our public trees from the excessive pruning that destroys their forms. Cass will start by contacting Green Mountain Power.

2. The Tree Committee welcomes new member Betsy Braden of Bellows Falls.

Next Tree Committee meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for October 17 at 4 PM. The meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Compiled by:

Polly Thompson

Tree Committee member