

Montpelier Tree Board

Thursday, November 6, 2025 meeting 5:30-6:30PM (City Hall)

Attending: Sarah, Linda, Shawn, John S., Nancy, Owen, Joseph, John A (Recorder)

- *Acknowledgement of the land we are on and those who came before – Abenaki tree related vocabulary:*

Shawn reminded us that the land we are on was never ceded to the US Government by the original inhabitants who are still here. She also led the group in the review of our Abenaki vocabulary related to trees.

Tree = Abazi Paper Birch = Maskwamozi Balsam fir (a.k.a. Owl Tree) = Kokokhoakw

White pine = Koa Sugar maple = Senomozi

- *Approval of October 2025 minutes: Approved unanimously.*
- *Comments from the public: No public in attendance*
- *Tree Observations from Travels (Linda, John A)*

John discussed the Isle of Skye and the Armadale Castle located on that portion of the Isle considered to be the Garden of Skye which has a temperate climate due to the influence of the Gulf Stream. He shared pictures of a Sitka Spruce planted in the 1830s, a very large Rhododendron, a sign in the Armadale Gardens indicating an ongoing battle with Japanese knotweed, and a picture of some hills adjacent to Loch Linnhe which allow for trees to grow only in sheltered locations where soil has accumulated. Linda discussed the street trees of Kingston, NY which do not seem to have much green space but are covered by bricks which may allow for infiltration of water and that may account for why the trees are doing well. New sidewalks there are concrete with wider green spaces adjoining.

John S and Linda also attended the Urban & Community Forestry Tree Tales meeting at the North Branch Nature Center. About 30 people attended and 12 told some tree stories, including some bear stories.

- *Parks and Trees activities (Joseph)*

The Enchanted Forest was a great success and even with the drought conditions nothing burned down! Buckets of water were strategically placed and staff were prepared with fire blankets.

Joseph asked Board members to remind store owners not to add any salt to tree wells. Some of us were wondering if DPW was responsible due to salt spreading on sidewalks. Perhaps store owners could sweep salt away from the tree wells? Nancy volunteered to visit some of the downtown merchants to discuss what steps could be taken to protect the trees from salt.

Joseph reported that with some FEMA Recovery Funds we will be able to get water service to the nursery. John S showed us some paper wrapping material for protecting tree trunks from splitting due to sun exposure. Freeman Maples in particular seem susceptible to this. Joseph indicated that nursery trees are currently protected by plastic rodent guards 24 inches high. Joseph also asked if the Tree Board would be able to fund some tree purchases and the general consensus was yes. The following trees seem to be in demand: Serviceberry, Witch Hazel, Red Buds. Other recommendations were made for basswood and silver linden.

Park trail construction has recently included flood recovery work involving bridge reconstructions and culvert installations/replacements.

The Parks Department received a new truck!

Upcoming Parks work will involve some tree removals.

Parks has requested \$50K to fund the planting of 5 replacement downtown trees.

- *Treasury Report (John S):*

John S indicated that there was nothing new to report.

- *Knotweed Plan for 2026 (Linda and Steve B.):*

As Steve was not present, this item was deferred until a future meeting.

- *Cemetery Update (John S and Nancy):*

Great news as there will be a planting of Freeman Maples (Autumn Blaze variety) at five locations along the cemetery road. Cemetery staff will have water and fencing available. Tentative planting date is the week of November 17th. Cemetery staff have also agreed to planting some 8-10 oaks in the future.

- *Letter from Erica Garfin to State about Burning Bush plants at VHS (John S)*

The Commissioner of the Department of Buildings and General Services will have his staff develop a plan for the removal of the burning bush plants at the Vermont Historical Society on State Street.

- *Discussion as to what's next for getting trees/shrubs back into TD Bank parking lot (John S)*

As part of the renovation of the TD Bank Building at Main and School Streets, the contractors removed two Serviceberry plants and increased runoff from the site by laying down an impervious tarp under the stone in the area. John S will talk to the Mayor about what can be done and some public pressure from customers may be required for the TD Bank to correctly address the situation.

- *Calendar:*

- *Upcoming events*

- *Workdays (Sarah)*

- *Invasive removal – schedule: Sarah will e-mail Board members as to when any barberry removal efforts in Hubbard Park will occur.*

- *Fall tree plantings – schedule:*

This Saturday: Summer Street Park – Linda and some local volunteers will plant a Freeman Maple (Autumn Blaze variety). Sarah will deliver the tree.

7 St. Paul Street: A Freeman Maple (Armstrong variety) will be planted there.

5 Center Street: Waiting on DigSafe for a tree planting at this location.

- *Other business*

Linda showed the group the new green tree tags. At the present time it appears that you must use a wax pencil to write on them.

Joseph suggested that the Tree Board and Parks may want to start maintaining “Tree Report Cards” for R.O.W. trees which we have planted. Where this data would be housed is still under discussion but the group thought it a good idea.

Adam McCullough had recommended to Sarah that the Tree Board comment on DPW projects well in advance (i.e. early on in the planning process) as it is often the case that major decisions are made a year in advance of the project commencement. John S mentioned that he has been involved in the planning of the Rialto Bridge project.

Next meeting: December 4, 2025 5:30-6:30pm in City Hall