

Montpelier Tree Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 2, 2026 meeting 5:30 - 6:30 pm (City Hall)

Attending: Sarah, John S., Steve, Joseph, Owen, Nancy, Linda, Mike Hebert, John A (recorder)

Acknowledgement of the land we are on and those who came before – Abenaki tree related vocabulary: We reviewed the Abenaki word for tree: Abazi (ah-bah-ze). Linda mentioned that there is a YouTube video of an Abenaki elder which could be used to learn how to pronounce some Abenaki words. The spellings are somewhat artificial because it was not a written language.

Approval of March 5, 2026 minutes (as revised) – Approved.

Comments from the public: We were joined by Mike Hebert who works as an arborist for Bartlett Tree Experts and is looking forward to participating in Tree Board volunteer activities.

Tree City USA Update (Steve): Montpelier once again is a Tree City USA for the 24th time in a row. Our celebration of the achievement will include an Arbor Day Proclamation signed by the mayor and the planting of a tree. John S reminded the group to keep track of their volunteer hours on the spreadsheet created by Sarah as those hours represent an important component for qualifying as a Tree City USA. The link to that spreadsheet is here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wH2hRrFjT0OwGF5OSazj6kAvT0XgQJb3DOsxeyqT62s/edit?usp=sharing>

EAB Biocontrol (John A and Linda): On Wednesday, March 27th, we met with Joanne Garton, Chloe Sardonis (Protection Forester, Barre Regional Office), and Chloe's partner Meredith to walk the location which will be the release site for the parasitoid wasps which will utilize EAB larvae and eggs to feed their larvae (assuming Montpelier is approved to receive the adult wasps). The site is downgradient from the Tower at Hubbard Park, roughly between the Tower access road and the trail from the tower to Corse Street. There are three species of wasps that may be released and they have differing requirements relative to attacking EAB larvae and eggs. The mix of different sizes of ash trees in the proposed release site is important in the regard. There are also ash trees on adjacent homeowner's property that may eventually be protected by these wasps. The wasps cannot survive without EAB, are generally very small and pose no danger to other insects or humans. Joanne believes that we will learn whether or not Montpelier has been approved as a release location by the end of April. Only Chloe and Joanne are authorized to release the wasps. More EAB biocontrol information available at this link: <https://www.emeraldashborer.info/biological-control>

Parks and Trees activities (Joseph)

General update: Joseph listed some tree removals he had made since the last meeting including pines along the road in Hubbard Park, a large 30" ash on North Street at the Town line, and nine ash trees in the vicinity of Towne Hill Road and Murray Road. In addition, routine maintenance work and beaver protection in North Branch Park.

Parks will conduct a bike path cleanup on April 10th starting at the Peace Park. Volunteers should be aware of poison ivy and ticks. Joseph will send out a reminder this week.

Pruning workshop on river path recap (Joseph): Several Tree Board members attended the workshop as well as Joanne Garton and several students from Montpelier H.S. After Sarah he responded that there is certainly some subjectivity in those decisions. Sarah distributed copies of letters for Tree Board members to hand out to homeowners with prospective tree planting locations. Her order of operations was contact the homeowner with the letter, obtain a commitment, avoid sites with power lines and receiving snow loads, contact dig safe to ensure the location is acceptable, and schedule date(s) for plantings.

East State Street: Sarah also wrote a letter for the Dept. of Public Works stating that the Tree Board is willing to help DPW deal with affected landowners regarding tree issues.

Joseph mentioned that Parks will be busy dealing with the East State Street project through August and that the final designs have been submitted and are out to bid. He mentioned that the current plans are expected to cause less disruption to adjoining landowners. Moving existing trees was also discussed, in particular a white oak and two honey locust trees.

Joseph also discussed a tree order arriving from Branch Out Burlington with plantings to occur in the riparian zone in North Branch Park as well as Windham Drive and the Parks Connector trail.

Regarding the concrete pots in front of the former Post Office that we had discussed using in previous meetings, John S mentioned that because the building is now under auction, those pots are off-limits.

Species list for Country Club Road to City Council (John S): The committee reviewing the Country Club Road proposals has requested a listing of suitable tree species to be planted regardless of which proposal is chosen. John S offered to out that list together. Trees that are climate-change adapted should be in the list as well as a prohibition on Norway Maples. Sarah mentioned that the County Forester Robert Nelson is available for consultation on sites greater than 10 acres.

Treasury Report - 2026 Budget (update) John S: Nothing to add.

Cemetery Update and 2026 Plans (John S and Nancy): Joseph removed six Norway Maples and they will be replaced by nine oaks. John S and Nancy will be meeting with Cemetery staff next week to put stakes in the ground and observe stumps being pulled. Red oak, scarlet oak, and swamp white oak are being considered as the replacements.

Other business discussed:

Steve provided his recommendation for dealing with small patches of knotweed at the Country Club. He said let it get to about a foot high, then cut with a machete. Allow it to re-grow for three weeks between future cuttings.

Sarah mentioned that the barberry is very visible at this time of year but we need to wait for the ground to thaw so that the roots can be more completely removed. Sarah did guarantee that the weather on April 10th will be good with at least 60 degrees.

John S mentioned that it is once again time to treat downtown trees with gypsum. He will schedule a workday.

Linda mentioned that the Kentucky Coffee Tree has survived despite the fact that its cage was wrecked and will need to be replaced.

Joseph mentioned that paper wrapped around tree trunks will decompose but any plastic wrapping will need to be removed and re-installed next fall.

Calendar:

Upcoming events

VT Woodlands Conference April 11 8-4 pm @ VT State University, Randolph

Beaver Workshop – Sunday, April 26th 1-3 pm Lunenburg, VT

Vermont Introduced Species Collaborative Gathering Registration Friday, May 8th @ 111 State Street, Room 110. Register

VT Urban & Community Forestry Program Conference at VT State University, Randolph on May 28, 2026 Register by May 13th for Sliding Scale Pricing

Next Tree Board Meeting: May 7, 2026 5:30-6:30 pm in City Hall