

Montpelier Tree Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, July 2, 2026 meeting 5:30-6:30PM

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

Acknowledgement of the land we are on and those who came before – Abenaki tree related vocabulary (Shawn): Shawn reviewed the Abenaki word for tree, abazi, balsam fir, kokokhoakw, paper birch, maskwamozzi. We learned the ogemakw, snowshoe tree, refers to the white ash. Akw is a suffix meaning wood.

Approval of June 4, 2026 minutes: Approved without any changes.

Comments from the public: John S shared a Ram Das tree quote he received from his sister. Because we learn to appreciate trees the way they are, Ram Das suggests that we turn people into trees so that we can appreciate them just the way they are, without judgement.

Update: Watering Help Needed for Downtown Tree Watering Committee: Sarah noted that Mother Nature had been providing us with all the rain we have needed lately but that Abby will still need help watering downtown trees when this is not the case. John A recommended that Abby send out an e-mail when she plans to water downtown trees so any volunteers can show up to help. Ken Ferris, one of the regular volunteers, is now back in action. Sarah mentioned some homeowners were watering their new trees despite having had enough rain lately.

Storm Damage and Tree Maintenance Required: We briefly discussed storm damage to trees. A tree at the corner of Summer and Vine Streets was damaged according to Linda and John A reported damage to some trees on Hubbard Park Drive. Along the lines of tree maintenance, John S mentioned he had been going around town conducting some well-needed pruning and there is more such work to be done. Sarah mentioned that the access to the sidewalk on the Bailey Avenue bridge is blocked by box elder branches.

State Street planting update (Joseph): As we know the East State Street reconstruction and associated tree plantings has been delayed and will probably not occur until next year. On Main Street, the project to plant two trees adjacent to the City Center has begun. Currently the trench containing the structural soil is covered with a layer of gravel as Parks is waiting for DPW to some additional site work. After that occurs the gravel will be removed, a layer of the soil will be carefully removed and the plumbing necessary for drainage and watering will be installed. The trench top will be re-covered and then grates will be put in place with trees planted later. The two trees will be a Triumph Elm and a London Plane Tree.

Parks and Trees activities (Joseph): General update: Parks has eight new MYCC workers but with the heat index warnings this past week they were not tasked to do any work. Future tasks when weather permits will be invasives removal, North Branch River trail work, working in the nursery and Feast Farm, conducting some clearance trimming ahead of road paving projects (need 14 feet of clearance for construction vehicles), and construction of the outhouse at HP. A greenhouse is currently under construction at the Feast Farm.

Joseph indicated that the downtown ash trees have been treated again for EAB with the Emamectin benzoate injection method. Those trees are doing very well.

Linda mentioned the failing ash tree at the Baptist Church on Elm Street. Joseph stated that it is not in the ROW but the owners can be required to take it down as it represents a risk to the public.

The tree in front of the former Walgreens store apparently took a hit from frost as leaves were coming out. It has now produced secondary leaves.

John S mentioned that the chestnut trees near the MHS track need to have more sunlight which will require some white ash removals.

Invasive removal: Multiflora rose (Sarah)

The new trails into HP from Clarendon Avenue will require removal of invasive multiflora rose plants. Sarah spotted a neighbor, Emily, carrying a bundle of garlic mustard she had removed from the trail there. John S indicated that they have probably gone to seed already.

Sarah will work with Kassia Randzio of the Parks Commission to increase the number of volunteers for invasives removal efforts.

On another note, students at Union Elementary School have been looking after the trees there.

Treasury Report and 2026 Budget: John S believes we are in good shape financially. He mentioned that several people would like to make sizable donations in memory of friends who have passed so some consideration is needed as to where to direct those donations.

Commemorating Worth Allen (Nancy): A bench in memory of Worth is planned for the Split Rock Trail (formerly the Accessibility Trail). An oak planted with a painted rock memorial is also being considered in addition.

Calendar:

Report on Tuesday, June 23rd: VT Urban & Community Forestry Council field tour of Montpelier: Joseph indicated that the tour went well and included the nursery as well as the North Branch Nature Center Orchard and Nursery there.

Other business

John S noted that when wet downtown trees hang way down and are an obstacle requiring pruning, especially true for green ash.

John S also conducted a tree walk and was accompanied by an arborist from Manhattan who is in town during the summer months. He has been invited to a future Tree Board meeting.

A town in Quebec, Terrasse-Vaudreuil, has recognized trees as living beings with their own legal rights. Written justification must be provided before any tree can be removed and replanting is required.

In Athens, Georgia a white oak there is a "Tree That Owns Itself" holding legal ownership to the land within eight feet of its base.

Speaking of oaks, the ones planted in Montpelier's Green Mount Cemetery this Spring are not doing well with two of the recently planted oaks not likely to survive. One thought is that fall planting might be a better strategy for oaks which are characterized by a taproot which might be easily damaged.

Next meeting: August 6, 2026 5:30-6:30pm in City Hall