

DRAFT Tree Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 1, 2019

Attending: Abby Colihan, Lynn Wild, Ken Liberto, John Akielaszek

With only three Tree Board Members in attendance, we did not have the necessary quorum for approval of items. Therefore, the meeting was held for informational purposes only.

Approval of Agenda - deferred

Approval of July minutes - deferred

Comments from the public

Regarding planting of trees at the corner of Loomis and Liberty, a member of the public had asked Lynn at that location why the new trees were being planted so close to the existing crabapple and ash trees. The answer given was because the trees will eventually replace these trees.

Old Business:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) (from John A)

- Inventory update - Trees on North Street and Towne Hill Road need to be checked as they were flagged by volunteers

- Trap monitoring - all traps have been checked except @ 3 Penny Tavern; no EAB captured to date; will be checking traps again this month; NL Trap being checked every three weeks; the Capitol Theatre purple trap is on a twice/season check frequency as used by the State of Vermont.

- Tree investigations to date - Adz and I conducted branch sampling at suspect locations on Gould Hill Road, Hill Street, and Richardson; also checked some trees on Gallison Hill Road just outside City limits. Adz took down one dead ash behind the the Elementary School on School Street and it was checked for EAB. Other insects were found but not the distinctive pattern of EAB galleries.

Parks and Trees Department update (Jac/Adz) - no report.

Nursery: John Snell's e-mail report on nursery:

After several workdays and support from Parks, the nursery is in pretty good shape. There will need to be ongoing weed whacking, some sooner than later, and the trees still need to be tagged at some point. Additionally we need to inventory what is there and identify which are from last year ready to be moved and which might be ready this fall.

Lynn and Abby tagged 37 trees at the nursery today. The inventory will be continued. They reported that mowing is what is needed as well as watering of the trees as the rainfall associated with some t-storms has not been sufficient. The mulch around the trees may be absorbing most of the water received, not the tree roots. The row of cedars appears to be dead. We will target August 6th (next Tuesday) as a suggested workday to water these trees. We would like to utilize the watering system used by Parks to water trees along the bike path to provide the source of water for a bucket brigade approach.

Update on watering downtown: Abby reports that with assistance from Meredith K, Ellen and Jerry she plans to do some watering of the downtown trees Friday (Aug 2) and possibly over the weekend. She reported that the new hoses are fabulous and watering of the trees is a work task that she has well under control.

New Business

Flagger training - held July 31st (Adz) - no report.

Watering system at nursery: John Snell e-mail report on nursery watering system:

NBNC is not interested in having us hook up to their water source via a hose.

NBNC would also like us to remove the tank from on top of the shed.

John A has found we are able to legally withdraw water from the river on a limited, but very sufficient, basis. We will obtain a letter to that effect from the State of Vermont.

Having a solar pump system like the community garden has ends up being quite complicated.

John suggest we use a pump and new tank with a drip system. James is investigating how to proceed with the drip system. John S will ask the Parks folks to see if the gasoline-powered water pump, which we used to use at the nursery and is now up at Parks, still is functional. If not, I'll investigate a new pump, either gas-powered or electric (generator). Hopefully all the trees can make it through this hot spell without additional water!

The use of a gasoline powered pump will be a topic for discussion at a future Tree Board meeting as there is some concern regarding this.

Fall planting - Abby and Lynn report that we will need to move 8 - 10 trees from the nursery before they get too big.

From Page Guertin's e-mail: Rain Garden planned for VSECU's Bailey Avenue property is scheduled to be constructed during the week of August 12-16, and the Montpelier Conservation Commission is looking for volunteers to talk with curious passersby about what's happening during the construction phase, and to plant flowers and shrubs toward the end of the week. (Of course, dates are weather dependent - fingers crossed!!) If any of you has some time, and/or would be interested in helping out during that week, we would be hugely appreciative! Also feel free to pass on this invitation and my contact information to anyone you think might be interested. We have a phenomenal team working on this project: Sarah and Alex Hoffmeier, Elizabeth Courtney, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps whose Conservation Water Quality Project Manager, Justin Geibel, will be leading the crew doing the construction, and an incredible group from VSECU. People can email or call me with questions or to volunteer - 461-7949. Page Guertin

Sarah H. reported via e-mail: Ecolibrium - (her business) is partnering with the Conservation Commission for the Rain Garden Project at VSECU. This is one of only a few green infrastructure practices along the river in Montpelier and we hope this spurs more businesses to take action and better deal with stormwater before it goes into the river. We are installing the rain garden the week of Aug. 12 and welcome volunteers (I can send more on this when we have details for the week). In addition we will be leading educational workshops on green infrastructure (rain gardens) and proper installation/maintenance, but there is a place for tree education too! Although the rain garden design will not have any trees, I think it's still important to talk about them since, I noticed that all the existing trees in planting beds at VSECU are volcano mulched!! It's always a touchy subject to criticize a landscaping company's work, but perhaps during one of the installation/care workshops, a Tree Board volunteer would be willing to co-host with me on proper tree planting/care. I think coming from another person would be well received by the landscaping company in charge of maintenance. Let me know if you're interested and we'll figure out a date/time.

Snake worm update via e-mail: Sarah is continuing to work with Dr. Gorres and Maryam (his grad student) as they run their experiments using worms from and in our Tree Board nursery. Dr. Gorres was awarded a grant that involves he and Maryam doing public outreach as part of the grant requirements. Since he partners with the Tree Board, he will be presenting at NBNC and showing folks the worms from our

nursery this fall. Sarah will send more information on these if you would like to join when Sarah has the dates/times.

Abby reported seeing Geoff Beyer's official announcement of retirement in the Times Argus

John Snell Downtown Trees report via e-mail: The anticipated construction of three new tree wells in the downtown will need to wait until spring due to DPW being overcommitted. We are aiming to have six constructed in the spring.

New grates and guards are on order and should arrive soon. More will be ordered next spring to bring us up to 100% coverage.

Abby, Lynn, John and Ken recommend the Tree Board utilize a "Belfast, Maine" approach to our downtown trees as per the photo that Abby provided showing how they protect their downtown trees. Ken further suggested that we do a demonstration project with one or two downtown trees, Lynn suggested possibly including a bench sitting area around each tree. This would protect the trees from snow plows in the winter and prevent the tree garden from becoming a tripping hazard.

Lynn, Abby and Ken continue their work on a volunteer list and organizing educational events to be associated with each Tree Board meeting. Charlie Nardozi may be an invited speaker (possibly for next year's Tree Festival 2-9-20).

Workdays:

August 6th (Tuesday) - high priority as the nursery trees are suffering from the heat and lack of sufficient rainfall. We hope to get Parks involved in assisting us to water these trees.

Other lower priority activities: nursery mowing, mulching and weeding, phragmites cutting,

John Snell e-mail: Steve and John Snell did not get to cutting the patch of phragmites near Dunkin's Donuts. If anyone would like to work with Steve in the next couple of weeks, please talk with him. It is a hot, sweaty job for 2-3 hours! Also pretty tricky as it is on the steep river bank. The battery-powered hedge trimmer is in my garage and Steve has his trusty machete. If it does not get done, so be it says John Snell.

It was the consensus of the group at the meeting that watering the nursery trees should be done before any other Tree Board work.

End of Minutes