Montpelier Tree Board **February 6, 2020, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Memorial Room, City Hall**

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Attending: Sarah, Lynn, Erin, Shawn, Adz, Jac, Steve, John A.

- **Opening Remembrance of where we are:**
  Lynn reminded us that we are on land not ceded to us by its original inhabitants and that we should respect their relationship to the land as we develop our own.
- **Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved with the addition of a discussion regarding the Tree Warden position as well as adjusting the request for funding speaker Cat Buxton (reduced from $400 to $300). The NBNC room fee remained at $100.**
- **Approval of January, 2020 minutes: There was a consensus that attendees were not familiar with the contents of those minutes so approval was postponed to a future meeting. *The January, 2020 meeting was the pot luck at John Snell's and it is not clear if notes were taken and/or reported for that gathering.***

- **Comments from the public:**
  Ken (not in attendance) reported via e-mail that it was time to sit by the fire in the rocking chair and rest up for Sunday (i.e. the Festival of Trees). He reported weather is a challenge up here (either referring to East Montpelier or Vermont in general).

- **Old Business:**

  Parks and Trees Department update (Adz):
  Adz took a Tree Risk Assessment Qualifications Training program and reported on what he learned. Trees are, in general, fairly low risk and you can prioritize their maintenance by assessing the risks they pose. To that end, Adz has assessed trees on the boundaries of Hubbard and Blanchard Parks which may pose risk to adjacent landowners. Ash trees in particular were looked at and based on risk some were flagged (blue for Hubbard Park) and orange for Blanchard Park. He also learned that calling a tree a hazard tree is not proper nomenclature; rather you should more properly assess what aspect of the tree poses risk. While big trees may cause some concern on the part of the public as to risk, a more measured approach (than cutting them down) is to monitor them over time. Adz hopes to keep some of the larger ash trees on the boundaries of these Parks rather than cut them.

  Parks and Trees Department update (Jac):
  Jac reported that a grant from last year still has about $500 - $700 left for tree purchases. She would like to coordinate with the Tree Board in making those purchases and the grant money must be spent by the end of February, 2020. She expressed some misgivings about buying trees from Washington State as opposed to more local sources (more discussion on this to follow). Shawn provided a couple of possible sources (Conservation Districts Tree sale; Heather (@Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District) and Lynn added Elmore Roots.

  Jac also discussed Riparian Restoration at Two Rivers (property at Home Farm Way near roundabout) and planting along riverbanks there. Shawn noted that the banks are fairly steep and Jac might want to wait to plant there after the property is regarded. The ownership of the parcel is in limbo; Alec and Historic Preservation are looking into that aspect. Parks is using the parcel as an ash wood storage location presently.

  Festival of Trees (2/9/2020) update (Lynn)
  The Festival will be at the North Branch Nature Center from 1 – 4 p.m. and set up crew will start at 11 a.m. The folks with table presentations will be there at noon for their set-up. The Neighborhood Tree Planting group will be adjacent to the Friends of the Winooski table to allow for dialogue regarding planting locations relative to streams. The Friends are also running a Lawn to Forest Program, replacing grass with trees. There appears to be considerable interest in this year's Festival according to indications from social media. Erin will work with Ryan on face painting; Ken Benton will lead a winter tree ID walk (snowshoes?), Mayor Anne Watson will

address the gathering; Adz has volunteered to deal with parking issues, Steve will pick up four gallons of cider and Cat Buxton, the main presenter, will address dirt versus soil and topics related to soil health and food forests. James will bring a plant based chili. John A will have the EAB displays.

Request for $300 to fund speaker Cat Buxton and $100 for the NBNC room fee (Lynn)
Lynn noted that Cat had suggested $250 but Lynn negotiated the request to $300. Cat has put in a lot of time on this presentation. The NBNC is also providing considerable assistance In addition to Ken Benton's participation. All board members present voted in favor of providing the funding (total $400). John Snell and Abby Colihan who were not in attendance had also previously expressed their approval.

Lynn is looking for two to three folks to take over the Festival in the future (she will mentor).

Arbor Day Conference workshop proposals (Sarah):
The Conference is scheduled for April 30, 2020. Sarah and James will provide a presentation regarding looking at projects through a lens of landscape design and how to get people more involved with these projects and with the resulting landscapes. Sarah will be taking a week long course in New York (the National Green Certification Program) given by the Eco Landscape Alliance prior to the Arbor Day Conference which may provide additional subject matter for their presentation.

Tree Warden Discussion
Geoff is no longer Montpelier's Tree Warden and Alec has agreed to take on the role on an interim basis so as to provide some oversight to Adz regarding tree removal decisions. The City Council must approve the individual selected but has not advertised for the position yet. John mentioned that the Tree Warden is required by City Ordinance to attend Tree Board meetings so as to provide two-way communication regarding City tree issues. The Board will recommend that the City Manager begin the process to recruit for this position.

Further Tree Purchasing Discussion
Lynn noted that not all trees are equal when it comes to providing biodiversity benefits relative to insects, especially butterflies and moths. The Tree Board should be somewhat biased in our tree purchases to favor those trees that provide the greatest biodiversity benefits. Shawn added that it is important that trees be sourced locally as trees with a local genotype will provide a more consistent benefit to local insects. She provided an analogous example of how milkweed seeds from mid-Atlantic states planted in Northern states caused monarch butterflies to stay in the North longer due to providing nectar for a longer period and eventually those monarchs would get caught by early freezing weather and perish. It was the consensus of the group that we should source our trees locally if at all possible.

Adz noted that due to a change in corporate ownership in Washington State he did not believe that John Snell had ordered trees from that source as yet.

Workdays
Given the upcoming Festival of Trees, Sarah suggested that we could, on our own during walks, check for any beaver damage and the wire protections that we installed in the past.

Reminder: "Siboinebi" Pathway (pronounced see-bo-WEE-neh-bee),
"River Water" in the Abenaki language