

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Tree Advisory Board
Special Meeting Minutes – 1st October, 2020

The Tree Advisory Board held a public hearing and special meeting on Thursday 1st October, 2020 at 5:30p.m. at the north end of the Guilford Green with Chairman Shirley Girioni presiding.

Present: John Cunningham (Member at Large)
Caroline Herrick (Leete's Island Garden Club)
Shirley Girioni (Guilford Garden Club)
Shavaun Towers (Member at Large)

Also Present: Tree Warden Kevin Magee

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 5:30p.m. Mrs. Girioni introduced the members of the Tree Advisory Board and welcomed newly appointed member Caroline Herrick.

Town of Guilford: Proposed Removal of Norway Maple Tree Located at the North End of the Guilford Green (across from 96 Broad Street) Damaged by Past Storms:

1. Presentation by Guilford Tree Warden: Mr. Magee stated that under Connecticut General Statute §252 the Tree Warden was required to issue a decision within three days of the public hearing and an applicant then had ten days to appeal that decision. He said he had posted the Norway Maple for removed after a storm at the end of August. The tree has lost large leaders on the south side, there was partial damage to the trunk and decay where another leader was lost. There was evidence of stress cracking and stress cracking on a limb. Evaluating the hazards Mr. Magee mentioned the nearby Broad Street with cars and the fact that the tree was weighted in that direction. He stated that the tree was worked on several years ago, that a cable was installed and the Town had tried to preserve it as best it could. There is damage up in the canopy overhanging the road and some branches have no leaf cover. Mr. Magee circulated copies of a Tree Risk Assessment and Recommendations report prepared by a licensed arborist from the F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company dated 9/28/20. He highlighted some of the concerns listed in the report – that the crown was unbalanced and weighted over the road, there are very long overextended limbs, evidence of conks and fruiting bodies which indicates trunk decay, and limited soil around the roots.

2. Questions and Concerns from Tree Advisory Board Members: Mrs. Girioni asked how old the tree was. Mr. Magee replied that he did not know but he thought it may have been planted after the 1938 hurricane. Ms. Towers asked if the utility company (Eversource) had looked at the tree. Mr.

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Magee replied no, that he had not had a chance to contact Eversource. Mrs. Girioni felt that Bartlett Tree Expert Company's report was very professionally done and she concurred with its assessment.

3. Public Comments and Questions: A) Wendy Staschke, 594 Long Hill Road, asked if the report had been posted online as she felt it was a lot of information to absorb and understand at a meeting. She felt the tree was one of the last original trees on the Green and while it was bizarre looking she thought that was part of its charm. Ms. Staschke asked if any consideration had been given to making it safe. Mr. Magee replied that the Town had tried to do so earlier but its attempts had failed. He added that another tree would be planted to replace it. Mr. Cunningham pointed out that Norway Maples were on the State list to be eradicated because they were considered an invasive species. They are no longer produced by nurseries and one would not replace a Norway Maple with another Norway Maple. Mr. Cunningham added that there would not be enough branch structure to support the tree if the Town tried to save it and he felt it would be better to remove it and replace it with two new trees. Later in the meeting Mr. Magee said the report had not been posted online. Ms. Staschke said again that it was one of the oldest trees on the Green and should it be removed just because it did not look attractive.

B. Thomas Wakeman, 42 Water Street, read a poem and sang a song and basically was not in favor of removing the tree. He disagreed with Mr. Magee saying he believed the tree was leaning towards the Green, not the road and was not a problem to the utility wires. He added that when people got old one did not get rid of them and the same should apply to trees. Later in the meeting Mr. Wakeman said he was not willing to take the opinion of one arborist whose job was to cut down trees. **C. Keith Staschke, 594 Long Hill Road,** asked if the tree was such a hazard why had the town not closed off the road so cars and pedestrians were no longer moving under the tree. He said the tree had been a hazard for months. Mr. Magee replied that he could have taken down the tree immediately but he wished to give the public the courtesy of being able to comment. Mr. Staschke said if the tree was so hazardous the Town was negligent in not taking it down immediately. Mr. Cunningham added that a licensed arborist had reviewed the tree and in his report it had been deemed a hazard. He explained that there were different grades for this, and that from an insurance and legal standpoint it made it a different tree.

The public hearing was closed at 5:56p.m. and was followed immediately by the special meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING

Deliberation of Public Hearing Items: After brief discussion the Tree Advisory Board unanimously recommended that the Norway Maple should be removed.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the special meeting at 6:00p.m. Ms. Towers seconded the motion and was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted: _____ Katharine Stewart, Recording Secretary