

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Tree Advisory Board
Minutes – 19th November, 2020

The Tree Advisory Board held a virtual regular meeting on Thursday 19th November, 2020 at 4:00p.m. with Chairman Shirley Girioni presiding.

Present: John Cunningham (Member at Large)
Shirley Girioni (Guilford Garden Club)
Caroline Herrick (Leete’s Island Garden Club)
Patricia Keegan (Guilford Conservation Commission)
Shavaun Towers (Member at Large)

Also present: Tree Warden Kevin Magee

Liaison to Tree Advisory Board Dottie Colonese (Guilford Garden Club, joined meeting at 4:10p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 4:05p.m.

Ms. Towers made a motion to add “Tree Planting at the Guilford Community Center” to the agenda. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Minutes of 20th August, 2020. Ms. Towers seconded the motion and it was carried with 3 votes in favor. Ms. Herrick and Ms. Keegan abstained since they were not serving on the Board in August. Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of 1st October, 2020. Ms. Towers seconded the motion and it was carried with 4 votes in favor. Ms. Keegan abstained since she was not serving on the Board in October.

Upcoming Tree Plantings: Mr. Magee reported that two trees would be planted on the Guilford Green where the Norway Maple was removed on the north end. Another location would be the emergency removal of a tree in front of St George Church. Mrs. Girioni said an architect, Walter Weissenborn, who served on the Design Review Committee had recently died from COVID-19. The Committee had decided to donate \$500 to the Guilford Garden Club to plant a tree in Mr. Weissenborn’s memory. Mrs. Girioni said his office overlooked the Green so this would be a great location for his tree. The tree would be planted next spring. Later in the meeting Mr. Cunningham said permission would be needed from the Green Committee to plant this tree. Mr. Magee added that the committee would be more likely to approve a replacement tree than a new planting. He then asked for planting locations for other trees next year noting that several trees in front of the stores on Whitfield Street were not looking too healthy. He added that this might be more of a project for 2022. Ms. Towers said the Board had talked earlier about planting on the north end of River Street, south of Route One. Mr. Magee said he would send out

a reminder before the next meeting for Board members to drive by and review this. Ms. Towers said although this was not within the Board's purview the CTDOT service yard seemed to have lost a lot of trees and asked if there was a way to have some of these replaced. Mrs. Girioni replied that she would contact State Representative Sean Scanlon to see if he could establish some screening. Mr. Cunningham said the area where the water tank used to be needed something. Perhaps the Town or the Water Company would allow something to be planted. Mr. Magee noted that there were long term leases for cellular towers so he did not know what might be allowed. Mrs. Girioni said in the past permission had been given to plant in the State right-of-way. Mr. Cunningham replied that it was now very difficult to obtain that type of permission. Later in the meeting Ms. Colonese said she had given an incorrect balance for the Guilford Garden Club's tree planting fund at the last meeting. It was not \$15,000 but was \$12,949.

High Street Tree Work: Mr. Magee said he had received another telephone call from the property owner at 36 High Street and had told him TAB was still evaluating the street. Mr. Cunningham stated that the street was overplanted. On the side with utility wires there were a lot of Norway Maples which Mr. Cunningham felt could become a problem later on. He said he was not saying to remove all of these but some were 20' on center and the spacing was bad for this variety. He suggested checking to see if the trees were in good health and then have Eversource prune the ones under the wires. Mr. Cunningham said the street was very dark in the middle of the day. Ms. Towers agreed that it was too dense. She and Mr. Cunningham volunteered to look at the street and make suggestions. It was felt it would be better if the street was lightened up and some trees were removed. Both the trees at #36 could be removed. Mrs. Girioni asked if that was what the owner wanted and Mr. Magee replied yes. Mr. Cunningham felt approximately 12 trees could be removed. He thought one tree was dead and should be scheduled for removed. Other trees were very tangled in the utility wires and would have to be dealt with by Eversource. On the utility wires side Mr. Cunningham said almost all the Norway Maples were directly under the wires which was problematic. It was suggested Mr. Magee should walk the street with Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Towers. Mrs. Girioni said the homeowners would have to be thoroughly informed before any trees were removed.

Tree Planting at Guilford Community Center: The meeting was joined by Parks & Recreation Director Rick Maynard, Seniors Program Coordinator Terry Buckley and Custodian Todd Rake at 4:30p.m. Mr. Maynard stated that several trees had been lost over the years from storms. At least 3 were lost which he wished to replace and there were others which should be removed and replaced. He added that funding had been donated (\$3,000). Trees around the courtyard which were lost could be replace. Mr. Cunningham said he believed the trees were Bradford Pears which were split and should all be removed. However, he added that if the stumps were not removed one could not plant in the same place. Mr. Cunningham recommended removing the root mass in the island and add soil for now. Mr. Magee noted that some of the cost could be offset by having the Department of Public Works plant the trees. At the courtyard he recommended planting on the back side of the hedge so the trees were further away from the sidewalk. – 3 trees could be planted. Ms. Towers suggested medium scale trees for the courtyard and something bigger for the island. Mr. Magee wondered about other islands where trees had been removed. However, Mr. Cunningham said there were septic tanks under them. Mr. Cunningham

and Ms. Towers agreed to work on this project. Maynard, Buckley and Rake left the meeting at 4:45p.m.

Eversource Tree Work Update: Mrs. Girioni said Eversource had done a good job taking down the Norway Maple on the north end of the Green. Mr. Magee reported that they were working on Route 77 and Route One, Goose Lane, Sperry Drive and around the center of town. Eversource wished to do heavier removals next year and would provide a list of the proposed areas. Mr. Magee said he had asked their arborist to attend a future TAB meeting as Eversource was asking for more than the Town usually allowed. Mrs. Girioni asked if the trimming had reduced outages. Mr. Magee replied that he believed so and said he had seen less damage than before. He also suggested setting up a campaign for residents to review trees so they did not fall on the wires and become a problem. He felt this was not just Eversource's problem but a whole town issue.

Development of Guilford Tree Policy: Ms. Towers said she hoped to have a draft by the next meeting.

Planning & Zoning Commission Regulation Update: Mr. Magee reported that PZC had hired a consultant to update its regulations. He was asked if TAB wished to have a list of allowed tree species that it would like to see planted or should this be left open for a landscaper to provide a plan. Mr. Cunningham felt listing species might be over-managing projects. If a project had the right kind of landscaper this person should be selecting the trees, which could be reviewed by TAB. He also pointed out that when one was planting it depended on what trees might be available at that time. Ms. Towers suggested saying there was a preference for native trees but not going beyond that. Mr. Magee felt it should be ensured that a planting plan was designed by a landscape architect. It was agreed that the regulation should say there was a preference for native species and plans to be designed by a landscape architect and reviewed by TAB.

Other Business: 1) Refurbish Tree Grates on Whitfield Street: Mr. Magee reported that the soil amendments may be done within the next few weeks.

Tree Budget for 2021-2022 Fiscal Year: Mr. Magee said he would ask for an increase in the tree removal budget. He also wondered if he should ask for maintenance funds and the Board said yes. Mrs. Girioni recommended emphasizing stump removal. Ms. Towers agreed saying this was a public safety issue.

Public Forum: No members of the public were in attendance.

Approval of Bills: Ms. Towers made a motion to approve the following bill: Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00p.m. The next meeting of the Tree Advisory Board will be held on Thursday 21st January, 2021 at 4:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____ Katharine Stewart, Recording Secretary