

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Tree Advisory Board
Minutes – 15th February, 2018

A regular meeting of the Tree Advisory Board was held on Thursday 15th February, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Town Hall with Acting Chairman John Cunningham presiding.

Present: John Cunningham (Member at Large)
Paul Mei (Guilford Conservation Commission)
Estelle Nussbaum (Leete's Island Garden Club)

Also present: Tree Warden Kevin Magee
Susan Stotts (Eversource Arborist)
Ben Davis (Lucas Tree Experts)
Barbara Nugent (Guilford Garden Club)

Shirley Girioni (Guilford Garden Club) joined the meeting in progress (4:12p.m.).

Excused: Shavaun Towers (Member at Large)

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

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Mei made a motion to accept the Minutes of 16th November, 2017. Mrs. Nussbaum seconded the motion and it was carried with two votes in favor. Mr. Mei abstained since he was not present at the November meeting.

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

Other Business: 1) Refurbish Tree Grates on Whitfield Street: Mr. Cunningham reminded the Board that the plan was to have one grate refurbished free of charge in order to get information on a cost for the whole project. Then funding would have to be solicited. Mr. Cunningham suggested that the Town should set up an account from which money could be drawn for various projects. He felt existing stumps should be ground down before any more trees were planted. Mr. Cunningham noted that there were companies whose sole work was stump grinding. Mr. Magee pointed out that three estimates would have to be solicited. Mr. Cunningham replied that he would like to hire someone who would do a good job. He said again that work should be done first on eliminating some of the debris.

Mrs. Girioni joined the meeting at 4:12p.m. and assumed the chairmanship of the meeting.

Eversource Tree Work for 2018: Mr. Magee stated that it was part of the statutory requirement that Eversource provide a map of its 2018 pruning plan and he circulated copies of this. A total of 78.57 miles will be pruned in Guilford. This will include: Sachem's Head, Moose Hill, Leetes Island, Horseshoe, Nortontown, Murray Lane, Podunk, Whitfield, High, Norton Avenue, and some roads off Route 80 east of Route 77. Ben Davis said he had spent a lot of time with Mr. Magee who had been very helpful. He said he was currently working on the east side of Guilford around Routes 77 and 80, that work had begun in the middle of January, and so far there had been no issues. Mr. Davis added that two weeks ago he had reviewed the Enhanced Tree Trimming (ETT) work with Mr. Magee

looking at each road individually. He also explained that work was reviewed with homeowners and modified where possible. Mrs. Girioni asked about negative comments. Mr. Davis replied that there had been a few. However, he said forms were sent to homeowners for signature and that he worked with homeowners to resolve concerns. Mr. Magee noted that he, too, met with homeowners. Occasionally an owner would wish to have a perfectly healthy tree removed and he would refuse this request. Mrs. Nussbaum asked if homeowners had any legal rights. Mr. Magee replied that homeowners and the Town had a say in projects, depending whether it was a private tree versus a public tree. Ms. Stott mentioned that she had funding to remove hazardous trees. She added that there had been a lot of tree limbs down in North Guilford due to the ash borer.

Mr. Magee said one problem area was High Street where the trees were entangled in the utility wires. He wondered if it would be better to remove all the trees and then plant new trees. Mr. Davis said he had looked at this twice and received substantial pushback from the residents. Mr. Magee replied that if the trees were trimmed he would want to be sure it was done correctly. Mrs. Girioni asked how many trees would have to be removed. Mr. Davis estimated five and that perhaps the others could be trimmed. Mr. Cunningham felt removing the existing trees and replanting more suitable species would be a better solution to the problem. He thought trimming the trees would not be right. Ms. Stott suggested having the property owners plant trees on their own property. Mr. Cunningham felt it would not be possible to get the trees far enough away from the utility wires.

Mr. Mei asked if there were statistics on outages comparing this year to previous years. Mr. Davis replied that during Hurricane Irene there were 500,000 outages and during a similar storm this year there were 100,000. Mr. Mei said people had told him this year (2017-2018) that they had been impressed that there were fewer outages. Mr. Davis said the biggest component was working with everyone, that he had been successful working in Guilford at this time and last fall and that he would try and stay with this.

The Eversource representatives left the meeting at 4:40p.m.

Future Planting Locations: **1) Whitfield Street:** Mr. Magee stated that elm trees which were planted across from 405 Whitfield Street had split. It was noted that the elm trees planted by the Guilford Fairgrounds were fine but perhaps these were a different variety. Mrs. Girioni mentioned asking the owner at the corner of Broad and Whitfield Streets to plant a tree. Mr. Magee replied that the existing tree stump would have to be removed first. Mrs. Girioni then asked about planting in front of 148 Whitfield Street. Mr. Cunningham replied that the area was very narrow so this would be very difficult. Mrs. Girioni also said she was not sure the pruning done by Public Works on Whitfield Street had been done correctly and queried their qualifications. Mr. Magee replied that several members were former tree company employees. He thought it might be possible to apply for an America the Beautiful grant which could be used for tree pruning. However, this would be a matching grant. He said there was no funding available this year but it might become available in the future. **2) State Street:** Mr. Magee suggested planting ornamental trees because of the utility wires. Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Towers were asked to review this street and make recommendations. **3) Graves Avenue:** Mr. Magee said a Maple tree which was rotting out may be removed. Mr. Cunningham recommended removing some of the stumps before beginning replanting. **4) Park Street:** Mr. Magee circulated photographs of the trees in front of Christ Episcopal Church which were rotting at the base and splitting. Mrs. Girioni asked about planting Redbuds. Mr. Cunningham replied that these had weak wood. Mr. Magee added that it was a narrow space. **5) Other Locations:** Mrs. Girioni asked about 450 Boston Post Road where trees had been cut down. These

were supposed to have been replaced but this work was never carried out. Mr. Magee said he was waiting for when a new tenant went in who perhaps could be persuaded to carry out some planting. Mrs. Girioni wanted something done sooner so Mr. Magee said he would look into the matter. He also mentioned that one of the new oak trees planted on Fair Street had developed a double leader which would have to be dealt with.

Tree Removal and Replacement Ordinance & Policy: Mr. Magee thought creating a tree policy similar to the Town of Greenwich would help solve problems. The Board members were asked to read the Greenwich tree policy. Ms. Towers will be asked to draft a letter to the First Selectman regarding replanting trees as part of town projects.

Mr. Cunningham left the meeting at 5:15p.m.

Public Forum: Mrs. Girioni asked Mrs. Nugent about the Guilford Garden Club’s planting plan. Mrs. Nugent replied that usually the club had approximately \$1,600 available for tree planting.

Mr. Mei made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20p.m. Mrs. Nussbaum seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Tree Advisory Board will be held on Thursday 19th April, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary