

Tree Board Regular Meeting Minutes 4 February 2016

5:30-7:00 Thursday
City Hall Memorial Room



Attending:

Tree Board Members:

John Akielaszek, Sarah Hoffmeier, John Snell, Jeff Schumann, Lynn Wild

Volunteers:

Bob Troester, Jake Feldman, Steve Bailey, Tree Warden Geoff Beyer

Agenda:

- The agenda was approved
- Minutes from the January 2016 meeting were approved without changes
- Comments from the public

There were no public comments

Old Business:

- Update on St. Paul Street Project

Lynn provided an update on the St. Paul Street project.

On Sunday, 24 January, Lynn organized a Tree Festival. 10 neighborhood people attended. 5 people signed up to be tree stewards and 5 households expressed interest in having trees planted in their yards. Lynn is continuing to follow up with neighbors and she encouraged renters to contact the property owners.

Tree planting on St. Paul Street is scheduled for May 6, Arbor Day in Montpelier. The goal is to plant 10 to 13 trees on St. Paul Street that weekend. Most of the trees will come from the tree nursery but we may order additional trees/shrubs.

Lynn will be putting together a To Do list of what needs to happen to prepare for the planting. We will need to ensure that resources are available to dig out the trees at the nursery and schedule a time when this should be done. Lynn will also contact the city about possibly closing the street.

There was some discussion about where the next tree planting project could occur. Jeff suggested parts of Terrace St. Geoff suggested Liberty Street where there are or will be a number of trees that need to be replaced. It was also suggested that Lynn document the steps that were taken for the St. Paul Street project to be used as a guide for the next project. In addition, having a person who could mentor the people working on the next project would increase the chances for success.

- Update on City Forest Timber Harvesting Work

John S provided an update on the timber harvesting that occurring now on the Northfield section of the Town Forest. He noted that the ground is sufficiently frozen to prevent damage to the wetlands. Also the work is being done in a very sound manner.

Jeff reported that he has sent an email to Fountains to see about arranging a tour of the site with them.

- Update on Inventory & Management Software

Geoff and Alec have been reviewing and demoing various tree inventory and management systems. Geoff reported that the capabilities of the software have greatly improved since last year when he was looking at them.

The product they are leaning to at this time is Forest Matrix. It has all the features and functions they are looking for and is easy to use. However, it is not a cloud based solution and there is concern about the ability of installing the software on multiple devices and how then to sync the data between devices. It was also noted that Geoff and Alec would need to find out how to back up the data. Another concern expressed was the ability to share data with the public. The software has the ability to create Google image maps which could then be posted and made available to the general public. But procedures and frequency on doing this would need to be worked out.

As a next step, it was also suggested that they talk with current users for references.

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

- Update on Possible Tree Plantings for 2016

John S will send out a tally of trees to plant.

- Union School Playground Fund Raiser

John S reminded the group that the Union School Playground Fundraiser will be on 13 February. Plans for the new playground will be shown and there is expected to be an opportunity to work with the school on new plantings and preserving the trees already there.

- Continuation of Beaver Control/Damage Discussion

The group continued the discussion on how best to try to control tree damage beavers are causing along the Winooski River by the bike path. John S reported that within the past couple weeks the beavers had taken down more trees, some substantial ones. But he did note that trees with fencing around them were not damaged.

Unfortunately there is no good solution. Trying to control the beavers by trapping and removing them is an ongoing effort, not without costs. Fencing individual trees is very labor intensive, especially when it comes to small trees, and it also is a multiyear effort.

Geoff believes that the best means to protect the trees is to control the beavers. It was noted that these are bank beavers, not dam building beavers, and that they are living in an unnatural, urban environment with no opportunity to create ponds or wetlands or otherwise provide their usual positive influence. In Montpelier' urban environment all they can do is take out our native trees leaving room for the invasives to spread. Others proposed that continued fencing is a more acceptable way to proceed.

It was agreed that the Tree Board would make no recommendation one way or the other but would let Geoff, as Tree Warden, take the lead in determining what should be done.

New Business:

- No new business

Work Day Planning:

- February 6 the group will continue beaver fencing along the Winooski River near the High School
- 18 February is the next scheduled work day. Work to be done is to be determined. John S. suggested that we might do some pruning.

Next meeting

Thursday, March 3rd, 5:30-6:3 at City Hall