

**City of Concord**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**Tree Sub-Committee**

Minutes of March 21, 2019 Meeting

Meeting was convened at 4:30 pm at City Hall, 41 Green Street

In attendance:

Subcommittee Members: Robert Baker, Ted Diers, Heidi Lemay, and Craig Tufts

Subcommittee Members Absent: Zib Correll, Peter Breu, Guy Petell

Conservation Commission Members: Rick Chormann

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher (Planning), Jim Major (GSD), Chip Chesley (GSD), Stefanie Breton (PIO)

Others: Cory Keeffe (Community Forester), John Regan (resident/volunteer)

1. Minutes of February 22, 2019 meeting

A motion was made by Craig Tufts, seconded by Robert Baker, to approve the February 22, 2019 minutes, as amended, with edits that do not alter the context or outcome of the meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Strategy Discussion

Ted Diers led a discussion on a communications strategy. Handouts were available showing the Tree Committee's communications strategy. This included goals, target audiences, and an action plan. This handout can be used to help the committee guide its efforts and interactions with the public and other groups. Under the "action plan" section, the group decided to add "adopt a tree" to the list. Adopt a tree is complementary to the Sustainable Tree Program and can be a better fit for renters or people who do not have a space to plant a tree on their property through the Sustainable Tree program. There was discussion on how the committee could help identify more areas where adopt-a-tree could serve. Currently the Adopt a Tree program will plant trees on city property only, primarily the parks and cemeteries. There was agreement that the handout accurately portrayed the discussion and direction the committee had previously discussed.

There was also discussion on creating a one-pager that has all of the tree related programs listed on it. "If you love trees, here is what to do". Information on it could include: classes, events, the sustainable tree program, the Adopt a Tree program, volunteer opportunities, and resources such as i-Tree. Robert Baker volunteered to work on it.

3. Arbor Day/April activities Update

Beth led the group through a discussion on a number of events planned for April.

April 2 the Concord Insider will have "tree issue". Beth and Stefanie are providing them with some content and information on tree related topics.

Monday April 8 City Council Meeting: The Tree Committee will have 5 minutes to introduce themselves to City Council at their meeting. The committee agreed Ted Diers would be the

speaker, and other tree committee members were encouraged to attend. Beth noted she would be at the meeting for support if needed. The group discussed what the message should be to City Council. Messages include that we are the newly established tree committee, we have a goal to reverse the current net loss of tree canopy in Concord, remind councilors of the invasive pests/diseases effecting the canopy, discuss other problems and challenges to trees, recent losses and impacts, provide a brief history of previous program (2000) and how we now are enjoying trees from that program, and short term goals and actions for the committee. The committee also has some “asks”: ask for approval of \$7500 balance the Conservation Commission voted to release for the Committee to spend down, and ask that the anticipated General Services PCR request for spending on trees be approved. The group also considered mentioning the recently adopted street tree policy. Heidi may or may not bring a tree costume.

April 11 Tree Class at the Community Center: General Services and Cory will plant a tree to be donated by the State. The tree will be planted ahead of time in order to be prepared for the event, but will dig up around the tree right before the event so Cory can still demonstrate the tree planting. There is space reserved indoors at the community center, so when the planting is done Cory will continue the workshop discussing tree planting and tree care such as pruning, i-Tree, etc. It was noted that it would be good to have the one-page document tree information completed so that can be handed out.

April 19 Earth Day Celebration: There will be a tree planting celebration at Abbot Downing Elementary at 9:30 am. The group decided to cancel our regularly scheduled meeting for 8am on the 19<sup>th</sup> and instead join in the tree planting event. Beth reported that the school principal is very supportive and excited. It is a public event, and it appears that the Mayor will attend and say a few words.

April 26 Arbor Day: Because this falls on school vacation and there will be tree planting for earth day, there will not be a large public event for Arbor Day. There will be tree plantings at City parks that will be photographed (possibly video) and reported via the City’s social media.

#### 4. Other business

Cory mentioned that the Arbor Day foundation does a Tree Growth award as part of its tree City designation. Cory felt that Concord may be a contender for this award because of the activities and work planned for this year. Applications are due December 31. It was noted that along with the award and application there is feedback provided to the applicant which can be used to help guide tree related efforts in Concord. It was agreed that the City should apply and will discuss it at a future meeting.

Beth informed the committee that the Conservation Commission voted to release the \$7500 balance for the tree fund to the committee to spend down. It needs to be approved by City Council first.

Chip and Jim described to the committee General Services’ annual request for tree funding. In past years it has been included in their budget as a Program Change Request (PCR) for \$35,000 for tree planting. This would fund about 75-100 trees along with associated materials. This is estimated to be the level of tree planting required stop the net loss of tree canopy in the City. It is entered into the budget as a PCR because it is a “new” line item in the budget. This funding request has not been approved by City Council in recent years. The committee agreed that it would be in support

of such a funding request at this year's budget and would mention it during our presentation to Council.

Jim also provided some information about products that support tree root growth and protect roots from compaction in urban environments. Beth shared some promotional materials from one such product. During discussion the committee felt these products could be very effective in supporting tree growth and survival rates in where there is a lot of pavement and in parts of Concord that are in need of street trees. Earlier in the meeting the committee discussed gator bags, which can be filled with water that is slowly released to new tree plantings. General Services currently uses these. It was noted that the PCR budget could help pay for products such as these.

5. Next Meeting: There will be no April meeting of the Tree Subcommittee, however committee members were encouraged to attend the tree planting on April 19 that coincided with our regular meeting date, as well as other events planned in April. The next meeting will be May 3, 2019 at 8 am.

Meeting adjourned at 5:44 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Craig Tufts, Secretary