

City of Concord
Conservation Commission
Tree Sub-Committee

Minutes of August 25, 2022 Meeting
Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 43 Green Street

In attendance:

Subcommittee Members: Craig Tufts, Zib Corell, Peter Breu

Conservation Commission Members: Rick Chormann

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher (Planning), Stefanie Brenton (Public Information Officer)

Others: Stacey Brown (City Council), Liz McKinley (Community Forester NH Div. Forest and Lands), Becky Cawley (Master Gardener)

1. Call to Order.

Zib noted that Ted Diers (chair) was unable to make it this morning and asked if she could chair the meeting in his absence. Zib called the meeting to order shortly after 8:00.

2. Minutes of May 10, 2022.

The minutes of July 21 were unanimously approved with no changes.

3. Tree Champion Award

Ted had been taking the lead on this, and this was put on hold in his absence.

4. Bob Pollock's Concord Tree History update

Stacey gave an extensive report on the work they have done since the last meeting. She presented a document showing materials for a guided tree tour in the downtown area of Concord that visits 22 trees. She noted this tour could be done on paper, or through the app called Outer Spatial. It began with a map with numbered locations of notable trees. The next page included information about the benefits of street trees. After that was the guide that goes with the map numbered in order of the walking tour. Each tree had information and history about the tree species. There was a suggestion to add some history about the particular tree in question (not just the species overall). It was noted some of the trees were not in very good condition. Perhaps the narrative history of each tree could tell the story of the tree's history and explain its condition.

There was a brief discussion on whether the tour should be a City sanctioned tour, or just done by residents. The group thought it would be good to have it be a City initiative, and that it would need to go to Council for approval, probably on the consent agenda.

There was also a suggestion that the tour could be put into an ESRI storymap format. Beth shared an example of a storymap that was done for the City's Open Space Plan. The group thought a storymap might be a good idea. Craig offered to assemble one using the CNHRPC ESRI account so long as he is provided the content.

Stacey offered to share the work she has so far with the committee.

5. Penacook Tree Planting

Beth noted that the City is planning to hold a public meeting for the paving work in Penacook, to be hosted by TPAC, with the recommendation that the Tree subcommittee co-lead the meeting. Last meeting it was reported a meeting was deemed not necessary, but after further conversations it was decided a meeting was worth the effort. The Tree Committee can use this informational meeting to share with residents the sustainable tree planting sponsorship and the locations that were identified at the walk. The date has not been set, but is expected to be in October. It was noted that Penacook resident Jack Shields has shown interest in helping get more trees in Penacook and that we should reach out to him for this meeting.

Beth noted that she plans to walk the remaining streets to inventory tree planting locations in September and will send out dates for others to join if available.

6. Grant Opportunities

John was not available to report on his work, but Beth was able to mention some of the grant ideas that are under consideration. Liz noted that she is working on creating a grant specifically for schools to plant trees. The school would need to be the applicant. Grant amounts are up to \$2500, and it is designed to be easy to administer and too small for Governor & Council. The committee was eager to hear more when details of the program are ready.

There was further discussion on working with the schools. It was noted that the tree planting at the administrative building and at the high school recently took a lot of staff work and follow up, and is not a sustainable way to focus our efforts. It would be more efficient to have the school be the lead. It was noted that the crews that oversee the school facilities are stretched very thin. It was noted that in order for school employees to be empowered to work on tree plantings, they would need a directive from the school board. The Tree Committee should approach the school board at some point if we want to work planting trees on school grounds.

Becky noted that in addition to the Master Gardeners, there are Natural Resource Stewards who could help facilitate tree planting projects. They work through the UNH Cooperative Extension. It was noted that it is often best if staff plant the trees, but finding volunteers to maintain and water them has been the most effective approach.

Zib asked that if we get grants to plant more trees, will General Services be equipped to plant them all, or would we need to seek out another approach. Beth felt we would need to reach out to GS early on to see if they could do it. If they are overextended we would need to contract the work out, and be explicit on how the trees are to be planted to ensure it is done properly and in a way the tree is most likely to survive.

It was noted that Eversource may be able to provide trees or other support. Liz will follow up.

America the Beautiful is another grant program. Liz recommends that we team up in a partnership with a larger organization if we wish to pursue this grant, and to connect the tree program to green areas or a watershed for example.

7. Other Business

Rick noted that he had several tree saplings that he is offering up to individuals or organizations who might have a home for them, including white pine, mulberry, and mountain ash trees.

There was also a discussion about an invasive species of worms that destroy the leaf litter layer of forests and are quite destructive. When trees or plants are being moved from an infested property, plants need to be rinsed to bare roots as to avoid spreading the eggs of the worms in the soil. Committee members were encouraged to learn and be aware of the issue.

There was a question as to whether the tree committee should comment on the I-93 Bow-Concord highway project. Individual comments and participation is always encouraged. It may not be appropriate for us to officially comment via a letter of recommendation, especially because the Tree Committee is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. It was also noted that there does not appear to be a lot of room for tree planting associated with the project, but there may be some opportunities that come up later in the project development when design work is more detailed. At this point conversations about the project are still at a high level.

8. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 29th at 8:00AM

Meeting adjourned around 9:00 am

Respectfully Submitted,
Craig Tufts, Secretary

To-Do list:

Stacy will share with the committee the work to date on the tree tour

Liz will follow up with Eversource about a grant program/tree planting.