

City of Concord
Conservation Commission
Tree Sub-Committee

Minutes of January 19, 2023 Meeting
Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 37 Green Street

In attendance:

Subcommittee Members: Ted Diers, Tom Daigle, Craig Tufts, John Regan, Zib Corell, Stacey Brown, Rick Chormann (Conservation Commission Liaison)

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher (Planning)

Others: Liz McKinley (Community Forester NH Division of Forest and Lands)

1. Call to Order.

Ted called the meeting to order shortly after 8:00.

2. Minutes of December 7, 2022.

The minutes of December 7 were unanimously approved with no changes.

3. Penacook Trees Outreach Campaign

Beth reported that Ryan looked at locations that were identified as suitable for trees, and provided an updated list of proposed locations. Ryan eliminated a few locations where the planting area was deemed to be too tight.

Matt Walsh did the presentation at PVA covering paving and other topics including the mention of tree planting.

Zib and John explained to the group how they reached out to property owners about tree planting for the South Street paving, and discussed lessons learned and how they might approach it differently in Penacook. They noted cold call door knocking isn't the best approach, and it would be better to notice them in advance before following up in person. The group also decided to look for people in the neighborhood who know them.

The group agreed to send a letter in advance of reaching out in person. Stacey and Zib volunteered to work on a letter. The letter should state the tree would be free or highly subsidized, and that they would need to sign an agreement to take care of the tree. The letter should also say we will reach out to them to follow up, and information and the sustainable tree brochure should be included. After the letters go out, volunteers from the committee would follow up in person. Zib, Stacey, Tom, John and Ted offered to participate/tag along.

It was noted that it is likely but not certain if the trees could be provided for free.

4. Annual Report

Ted noted we provided a report to City Council last year and we should do so again. Ted offered to update the report from last year and send it around to review. March was suggested for a target, and to target the next Tree Committee meeting to share a draft.

Things to include in the report could be the number of trees removed, number of trees planted, the number of tree requests through see-click-fix, the paving program procedures, tree tours, Arbor Day, events, etc.

5. Sustainable Tree Program

It was noted Stefanie will have a promotional video featuring the Patten's tree on Rumford St

6. Spring Event

It was discussed that it may be best to stick with the traditional Arbor Day event at the schools through Jim Milliken. Trying to do more with the schools became overly complicated.

There was a discussion on how the committee could begin a bare root tree planting program. A video or information on bare root plantings could precede a possible tree giveaway. It was noted Merrimack County Conservation had bare root planting stock. An idea to demonstrate bare root planting at Keach Park was an idea, with May 16 being a possible date. Beth will reach out to Dave Gill.

7. Backyard Tree Planting

There was brief discussion, and it was noted this could be included in the annual report.

8. Tree Champion Award

John and Ted reported that they had worked on some ideas, and had the idea to give the first tree champion award to Jim Milliken. He has cohosted Arbor Day celebrations for several years, and is committed to helping to get more trees in the City. The award was originally intended to encourage and reward the business community, but this does not mean individuals could not be awarded. This will be a good way to get the ball rolling on the program. It was agreed Jim is deserving of the award and the group supported the approach.

9. Grant Opportunities

John emailed a list and summary of grant opportunities to the group prior to the meeting, and used this list to guide discussion. Items include Utility giveaways, particularly trees that are expected to be donated from Unutil and other possible future donations. Also discussed a NHDES stormwater program with asset management and planning grants for best practices to include green infrastructure. Federal grants including those in the BIL, IRA, and through the Forest Service were discussed, with Liz offering some overview of the Forest Service grant. Other options that were deemed a lower priority or not at the right timing include TreePlenish, a TD Green Space Grant, and others.

10. School Connections

After looking into it, it was determined that it was not necessary or the best approach to go to the School Board at this time, but instead it would be better to have a discussion with the Capital Facilities department first. Representatives from the committee could talk to them and ask about their needs and practices, and learn more about what could be asked of the School Board at a later time.

11. Online Mapping

Stacey reported that she had pictures of prominent trees at Blossom Hill Cemetery with geographic coordinates so they could be mapped. Stacey will send these to Craig to be put in an online mapping platform as a first step in developing a self-guided tree tour.

12. Farmer's Market

The group agreed the time spent last season at the Farmer's Market was time well spent. There was a brief discussion about continuing this season, starting in the spring.

13. Next Meeting: Friday February 24, 8AM

Meeting adjourned around 9:30 am

Respectfully Submitted,
Craig Tufts, Secretary

To-Do list:

Zib and Stacey agreed to draft a letter to Penacook property owners who could host a tree.

Ted would draft an annual report to council

Ted and John would work on the tree champion individual award

Tom would do School Board recon

John and Liz would work on school connections

Beth will reach out to Dave Gill on a potential bare root tree planting at Keach Park May 16.

Stacey will get Craig geolocated pictures of trees in Blossom Hill

Craig will work on getting the Blossom Hill pictures on an online mapping system