

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

Minutes of July 22, 2021 Meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, City hall, 41 Green Street

In attendance:

Subcommittee Members: Ted Diers, Craig Tufts, Zib Corell, John Regan

Conservation Commission Members: None

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher (Planning), Chip Chesley (General Services), Stefanie Breton (Public Information)

Others: Matt Cashman (Concord School District Director of Facilities & Planning)

1. Call to Order.

Ted called the meeting at 8:00.

2. Minutes of June 24.

The minutes of June 24 were unanimously approved, with an abstention from Craig who was not at that meeting.

3. Discussion with Matt Cashman from Concord School District

The group welcomed Matt to our meeting, and Matt said he was pleased to be here. Ted explained the committee, our recent work, and what our goals are. Matt thought there would be some good ways for us to work together.

Matt told the committee about work being done on the Dewey School site, which is School District's Administrative building. This historic school building is undergoing some renovation and maintenance, and parts of the property are dug up. There may be an opportunity for some tree planting when the landscaping is put back together. Matt described an area with a steep embankment and an area that could potentially be a rain garden.

Matt explained that the school facilities people are not expert arborists but do understand the benefits of trees and they are open to working with us. They could use advice on where and what to plant.

Zib offered that it is important to plant new trees, but another aspect is to evaluate and care for existing trees or understand why some trees are not thriving.

Matt noted an example of how a piece of a tree on the High School property fell, and an arborist's opinion on safety and whether the tree should be removed, maintained, or replanted would be helpful.

John noted that trees are often cut from constrained budgets. Matt agreed this is an issue, and he has a limited budget in the school's 10-year capital improvement plan. It is a matter of priorities. The Capital Facilities Committee guides decisions on capital investments.

Ted proposed an idea for a long range tree plan that would have a CIP category to pay for it. It was thought something like that might work so long as there is funding.

Discussion turned to expert resources. It was noted that Cory Keefe's position (Community Forester) hasn't been filled yet, and AJ's job covers the whole state and he is stretched thin. Zib mentioned the Urban Forestry center in Portsmouth. Zib noted we don't necessarily need a professional landscaping plan, but advice on appropriate tree species and locations.

Beth asked Matt if they have staff who can do tree plantings if they are provided trees. Matt said yes, so long as the trees are not exceptionally large. Matt said he thinks it will be easy for us to work with each other and he is a willing partner.

Discussion turned to sources for funding, or for trees. It was noted that Jim Milliken from Modern Woodman may be able to donate trees. He provides the trees for Arbor Day, including a tree planting in front of Abbot Downing Elementary School.

Craig asked Matt if he had any specific locations that he felt could use some trees. Matt mentioned again the Dewey School site, which would be timely given the work being done there right now. He also mentioned the Christa McAuliffe School at the Rumford Playground could use some trees. He noted some are dying.

The group agreed these two sites hold promise, and we should find a way to help get trees in the ground there. It was decided to do a site visit on Thursday, 7/29, at 8am, and several committee members offered to participate, along with Beth and Matt.

John offered to reach out to Jim Milliken about donating trees for the school, and also for landscaping. Stefanie offered to assist with a PR effort on any tree planting, such as a back to school planting. Chip will talk to Ryan about attending the site visit to assist with siting tree planting locations and species.

It was agreed that the group will continue the conversation on how to execute the tree planting at our next meeting. The committee would like to meet with the School Board.

#### 4. August Council Meeting Presentation

The group discussed plans to present to City Council the work of the Tree committee. Beth mentioned the committee has a placeholder on the August 9 agenda, and it seems likely we will ultimately be on the agenda. She will submit a report to council that would be attached to the agenda. The group listed some of the topics to discuss, including the inventory results, the sustainable tree program grant/signs, challenges to trees, report on cemetery tree plantings, the street tree policy, and enforcement practices. Ted will prepare what he would like to say and welcomes help with it.

#### 5. Sustainable Tree Program Grants and Signs

The group picked up discussion from the last meeting about Sustainable Tree Program grants. Chip asked if the signs for the Sustainable Tree Program would be permanent, and it was clarified that they are temporary political signs. They would need to be picked up before winter. The committee will need to take care of who will pick them up.

The grant program and signs are planned for 2022 tree plantings.

#### 6. Tree Inventory

Craig shared the updated map and results from the tree inventory. This would be shared at the council presentation. Craig said he would dig deeper into the data and resolve some of the “unknown” tree locations and remove from the map areas that have not yet be inventoried. The map can be sent with the report to council.

#### 7. Coordinating Tree Planting with Road Improvement Projects

Craig noted that nearly everyone who wants to participate in a planned site walk along South State Street and South Street with the Bike Ped committee (TPAC Bike-Ped) had filled out a poll for dates when they are available. He will choose a date probably tomorrow and notify both groups.

Craig explained that he envisions the purpose of the meeting is for members of the two groups to connect, and for us to discuss and take a look at how bike/pedestrian/tree/streetscape improvements might be incorporated into roadway reconstruction projects. These streets are due to be reconstructed soon, the group can discuss challenges and opportunities on the ground as we walk.

#### 8. Tree Walk

Beth reported that she reached out to Bob Pollock about putting together a tree walk (to tour notable trees in Concord). He said he could join a meeting for a short bit, or we could meet at Carter Hill for our September meeting over cider donuts. The group thought a September meeting with Bob was a good idea.

#### 9. Other Business

The group had a brief discussion about the importance of tree survivability. Chip explained the history of the Main Street project and how the structural soils for street trees were “value engineered” out of the project. There was a discussion at that time on whether to have fewer trees but keep structural soils, or to keep the number of trees the same and plant them in tree wells without additional space for roots to grow. The decision was to keep the number of trees. While the group did not reevaluate this decision, it was agreed that in the future survivability should take precedence over the sheer number of tree plantings.

#### 10. Next Meeting: Thursday August 26th

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Craig Tufts, Secretary

To-Do list:

Beth and willing committee members will conduct a site visit at Dewey School and Christa McAuliffe with Matt Cashman

John offered to reach out to Jim Milliken about trees for the school, and also for landscaping.

Beth will reach out to Ryan about tree plantings at Dewey School and Christa McAuliffe

Ted will prepare for the August 9 Council Meeting, with help from the rest of the group

Beth will submit a report to Council

Craig will improve the inventory map in preparation for use as part of a report to Council.

Craig will select a date for a site walk with TPAC-Bike Ped