

DATE: December 18, 2020
TIME: 8:36 AM

Minutes of the Shade Tree Committee

9 November 2020

The Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair Lucia Gates at 4:30, and attended remotely in alphabetical order by: Mike Chesson, Eva Hoffman, Jennifer Parker, DeNee Reiton Skipper, and Tom Walsh.

TREE WARDEN'S REPORT: Tom said in answer to a question about the Linden at 40 Walnut, that the Community Planning Board has asked the developer of the property for a revised plan. The town has removed or trimmed many trees in the past month, including those that came down in the last big storm. Tom also announced that he is retiring as Tree Warden 30 June 2021.

COMMITTEE BUDGET: Lucia and Eva contacted the Town Administrator's office about attending one of our meetings, and Patrice Garvin replied quickly that she, or a designated representative, will attend our next meeting, on 14 December. That discussion will be the first item on our agenda.

COMMITTEE CHARGE: Discussing the proposed new charge, the committee unanimously approved the addition of "interested citizens" to the current language that specifies "professionals in urban forestry" Eva moved a second change, that the committee is to "stay advised of the town tree budget," also unanimously approved. For the last paragraph of the current charge, Eva moved that "the committee shall set forth annual priorities and long-range plans for approval." Tentatively approved. Lucia will send a final version to the Select Board and ask them to consider our draft of a revised charge. Whatever is approved should go to the town's Highway Division, and possibly to Town Meeting. Currently, no new trees were planted in 2020, nor will be in 2021. Tom said that when the pandemic shut us down, the funds allocated for tree planting this year were added to the maintenance amount given to the Highway Division. He explained that removing or trimming trees can be done with a minimum of prolonged contact among workers, but that tree planting usually involves three men close together on the ground, guiding a new tree into place.

NEXT AGENDA: Lucia asked members to read and consider the current Belmont public tree regulations and be prepared to discuss them in December. The committee discussed whether its Project List was a public document, and should it be on the website or not. Lucia shared the Town Clerk's input. Tom explained some factors to consider for the town's hiring of a new Tree Warden. The minutes from the October meeting were approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:40.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Chesson to DeNee Reiton Skipper

Minutes approved,

Lucia Gates