

Shade Tree Committee Town of Belmont Massachusetts

Minutes

June 23, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 16:50 by Chairman Laura Matheson Simmons. Present were Nancy Forbes, Dorothy Rosales, Ruth Foster, and Denece Reiton Skipper and Lucia Gates. The minutes were read and accepted.

TREE WARDENS REPORT Tom Walsh reported on trees including a Memorial Tree (in Wellington Park next to the Unitarian Church) planted for a soldier killed in action. The Board of Selectmen and the Historic Commission were consulted. A crabapple was chosen, but it was put in a very bad place and "it looks ugly" said a member of the Shade Tree Committee, "and not respectful to veterans.

Dead elms were discussed. Also Memorial trees have died; two have been replaced and two more need to be replaced. Two callery pears on Concord Avenue have to be replaced. Several of the new Valley Forge elms at the town hall have died and have to be replaced. (Matt Foti is tree firm, Tagh Sweeny is architect.)

The fiscal year starts July first. There is a tree removal backlog. There was too much work to finish in spring. Over 100 trees had to be removed, some due to winter damage from 2 years ago. \$ 10,000 more is needed to cover additional work, and \$13,000 for the reserve fund.

ACTION Chairman Laura Simmons suggested the whole committee meet with the selectmen. She has a list of issues. Inappropriate things have happened that should have been done better if the Shade Tree Committee and its expertise had been consulted. The Committee and Tree Warden, not a "designer", should make tree decisions for the town.

PROBLEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

New Firehouse Laura Simmons went to a meeting of the Fire Station Committee. It was good and they were receptive to irrigation. There was a question. Where is the red maple supposed to go? Was it removed from the plan?

Recreation - Field house and Rink. The Recreation Commission is doing a master plan for the field house and rink which will affect the parking area. The Belmont Garden Club offered to help fund replacement of the current row of scruffy evergreens but it was decided to wait until the plans are done. Instead 2 weeping cherries were planted in Clay Pit Park near the Ruth Ippen magnolia. The cherries cost \$400 a piece.

Lucia Gates teaches on Thursday and asked if changing date to 4:30 Wednesday next year might be possible.

An exhibit of historic trees was discussed in the new exhibit space in the renovated Homer building (Annex)

Chairman Simmons said that Peter Castinino would fly the Tree City Flag. Also there was a question about displaying the crystal award somewhere in town.

No one was sure whether Habitat for Humanity would save the 2 big trees on the site for new houses.

The McLean Citizens Committee finances were questioned as to whether they were transparent enough for public accounting.

The meeting was adjourned at 17:40. The next meeting was set for fall.

Minutes respectfully submitted

Ruth S. Foster

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