



**Minutes of
The Shade Tree
Committee
19 March 2008**

PREAMBLE: I arrived a little early for the meeting and was gazing at the bulletin board when I saw the posted notice of our meeting and it had written across it:

Cancelled
11/17/08
R.M.
J.E.

That made no sense at all. In fact I went back later to confirm that I actually saw this. I did and checked with the clerk. The meeting was, indeed, cancelled. Other people arrived and were just as surprised as I was. Nancy had even checked her e-mail before coming to be sure nothing had changed.

The meeting was called to order promptly at 16:30 [a first since I've been taking minutes] by Acting Chairman Ruth Foster and attended by, in alphabetical order: Nancy Forbes, Dorothy Rosales, Andrés Rojas and DeNee Reiton Skipper.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

TREE BUDGET CUT: We discussed how short sighted this was, especially in an era when we are trying to conserve energy and preserve our environment. Without the natural cooling of the trees, and particularly without the tree canopy, even more pavement will be exposed to the rays of the sun and heat the town further. Thus, the electricity usage will be even higher; it is already more expensive. In light of global warming, this is not sustainable. This budget cut was tried back in the early to mid-1990s [and was the reason I joined the Shade Tree Committee], and we are still trying to catch-up and replace the trees that were not planted during that time. It is a small amount of money which works out to about \$1.25 per household to plant trees, while adding greatly to the aesthetics of the town and the housing value of its neighborhoods.

We wondered when the budget meeting was to be held and later learned that it had already been held and trees are completely out of the budget. This will, no doubt, disrupt the long-term contract Tom has with his supplier, and he may lose our access to that supplier in the future. This will only increase the cost of obtaining trees later on.

RAILROAD BRIDGE CLEANING AND LANDSCAPING: Andy will work with Joy Bittner of the Garden Club on the plantings to be installed along the banks of the bridge after the cleaning has been finished.

PLANNING AND ZONING BYLAWS: We discussed the planning and zoning bylaws to protect the existing trees and to add more shade trees to new redevelopment projects around town, especially to parking lot areas and other large paved areas. The Cushing Square redevelopment project is coming to the fore and we wish to be prepared for it. We also discussed porous pavement surfaces. It was agreed we will look at the bylaws on line and think how we can improve them to protect the trees and prevent the cutting and ill treatment of trees during construction. This is the link I found to that section: http://belmontma.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/BelmontMA_ZoningBylaws/SECTION5.pdf

Next meeting will be 16 April 2008.

Meeting was adjourned at 17:40.