

Minutes of
**The Shade Tree
Committee**
18 November 2004

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The meeting was called to order at 16:45 by Chairman Laura Matheson Simmons and attended by, in alphabetical order: Lucille Dressler, Nancy Forbes, Martha Moore, Dorothy Rosales, DeNee Reiton Skipper and Tom Walsh.

Minutes were accepted with the following corrections: the Claflin Street area is irrigated, and the spelling of *adelgid* was corrected.

TREE WARDEN' REPORT: The town budget process is starting and two separate budgets have been requested: One at level service; and one at quality service, which is not meant to be an extravagant wish list, but rather a budget of reasonable quality service. An additional goal is to divide the town into sections and review each tree in that section, deciding what, if any, particular care is needed for individual trees.

It was also explained that there is a "prevailing wage law" in this state and all are subject to their rates. Last year it cost the town an additional \$6000 to meet the requirements of this law. The hourly wage rate is set by the state and so is the definition of the work to be performed. Classification of all work is determined by the state and it severely impacts the amount and type of work to be performed.

This year the town lost more trees than were planted. Although the summer was wet, the harshness of last winter and the past two year's drought contributed the loss of 139 trees. A normal planting year is 125 trees and the typical loss is about 80-90 trees. This is the first year a net loss was experienced. On a happier note, we did receive confirmation of our order for this year's tree planting. Ash, Locusts, Red Maples, American Lindens, and London Plane trees are among those ordered. Oaks are difficult to start and are often lost, therefore none were ordered. The town has a no-spray policy and that influences the varieties ordered.

GARDEN CLUB PLANTINGS: The Junior Varsity parking area on Concord Avenue is heavily traveled and trammelled. The Arborvitae, which was ordinally planted to screen the parking lot, has suffered over the years. Some members of the STC will visit the site to offer suggestions for the plantings. Shade trees are, of course, good for an area of heavy foot traffic because well defined paths can be laid out beneath them, however, the surrounding mulching may present a scatter problem.

CLAFLIN PARKING LOT RESTORATION: The group of nicely-matched Amelanchier or Shad were planted, but the Elms will not be installed until next year. Also planted were grasses and bulbs and compost/mulch was applied.

CLAYPIT PLANTINGS: The Conservation Commission is looking at some new plantings to replace the ones destroyed by the oil spill earlier in the year. Martha is a member of both that commission and the STC and will keep us posted on their progress. Nancy may attend a ConCom meeting as well.

THE RAILROAD BRIDGE: The bridge will turn 100 years old this year and a planting might be a nice way to note this event. The bridge is town owned, but the MBTA needs to be contacted as does the Lions Club because both groups have an interest in this area.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, 15 December at Laura's house to enjoy holiday cheer.

Meeting was adjourned at 18:00.



Minutes respectfully submitted
by DeNee Reiton Skipper