



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 01/11/2012

Arlington Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Selectmen's Hearing Room, Town Hall, Arlington, MA

Present: Mary Ellen Aronow, Eliza Burden, Lisa Decker, Walter Phillips, Ed Trembly, Corinna Vanderspek (minutes), Greg Watt (acting chair)

Minutes of December Meeting

Minutes approved.

Town's Spring Tree Planting

Greg reported on the Tree Warden's responses to the Tree Committee's questions regarding the spring planting. There will be some funding out of the town budget. It still seems unclear, however, what, if any, role and/or input the Tree Committee might have in this spring's planting. Eliza pointed out that the ATC-organized planting last year was good PR and let people know about the Tree Committee.

Alternative initiatives were briefly discussed, such as organizing our own planting. Ideas included planting heritage trees (such as a beech on the St. Agnes lawn), organizing plantings at town parking lots or at the Fox Library. Eliza suggested asking the public where trees might be needed/desired, possibly in conjunction with an article on the Tree Committee in the Advocate. The question was raised what regulations for plantings/landscaping might be in place as far as new developments are concerned; Corinna will ask Joey Glushko from the Planning Department.

Street trees are ordered mid-March. Committee members discussed whether the Tree Committee would have any input on the choice of trees ordered. Corinna will take a look at the list of recommended street trees on the Town website and determine whether this is the old or the new list. She will also send the name and URL of the nursery the Tree Division orders from to give committee members a chance to take a look at their catalog.

A subcommittee was formed to work on a proposed new tree list for Arlington. Lisa, Mary Ellen, Eliza, and Corinna volunteered.

Corinna reported the final number from the Fashion at the Fox fundraiser. It netted \$3,743.01 for the Trees Please account.

Role of the Tree Committee

There was a general discussion of the role of the Tree Committee and a shared feeling that we would appreciate more clarification/guidance from the Town as to our role. Committee members felt, though, that some help from us at spring planting time seems welcome, as well as help with a tree inventory.

A number of questions arose which Sally Naish will discuss with Jimmy Dodge upon her return:

- How many trees will the Tree Division plant this spring?
- How much money is in the budget for the spring planting?
- What will be the cost of the trees vs. the cost of installation?
- Will money from the Trees Please account be used? If so, how much?
- If the Tree Committee were to raise funds independently, would we be able to have any input on how it would be spent?
- Will the Tree Division do the planting, or will they hire landscapers?
- What will the Tree Committee's involvement be?
- Can/will we be using planting volunteers? (Mary Ellen reported that the Scouts are eager to help out again).
- How many street tree requests have come in since the fall and what were they? Is the list exhausted now?
- Lisa Decker noticed a new sidewalk and street trees on Acton Street and would like to know who did the installation.

Lexington Tree Committee

Eliza reported about a conversation she had with members of the Lexington Tree Committee at a recent event. Jewel Kuljian serves as the coordinator for off-berm planting sites (and is also the liaison to the Lexington garden Club). Anne Senning is the tree inventory contact. As in Arlington, members of the Lexington Tree Committee are appointed by the selectmen. A "Friends of Trees" volunteer group works under the auspices of the Lexington Tree Committee on several projects. The Committee, in conjunction with the Lexington DPW, manages a tree nursery for the town. Also, they have recently added a winter moth fact sheet to their website.

There was some discussion about the feasibility of a street tree nursery for Arlington. There were several ideas about possible locations, for example Park Circle, the cemetery, and around Thorndike Field.

Corinna will contact the Lexington Tree Committee to find out more about their nursery and ask the following questions:

- How many trees do they grow and plant per year?
- Do they supplement by outside orders?
- How does the cost of growing and nurturing their own trees compare to ordering them?
- How does the process of removal (from the nursery) and re-installing work? Are there pruning issues?

Tree Inventory

Mary Ellen and Eliza reported on a meeting with Adam Kurowski (Town of Arlington GIS Coordinator), Jimmy Dodge, and Mike Rademacher (DPW Director). Adam looked at iTree and found it interesting. He also thought that a phone app might be a possibility as a tree survey tool. Jimmy had a list of information he would like to get out of a tree survey. Apart from identifying the species of street trees in Arlington, his first priority is to determine the soundness of the trees. The Tree Division is backlogged with pruning requests. A database on tree health would help in prioritizing pruning work. Generally, tree pruning requests have been dealt with in the order of when they were received. Both Adam and Mike suggested that adding new fields to the Tree Division's database could be helpful with and optimize ongoing management. Jimmy would also like a tree survey to result in a determination of the value of Arlington's street trees.

There was a general discussion about the usefulness of a tree survey, given the amount of work needed to plan and conduct it, as well as finding and training volunteers. Greg felt that, ideally, the survey should not just capture a moment in time, but that the information gathered should also serve as a foundation for the ongoing management needs of the Tree Division; committee members agreed.

It was decided to invite Adam to the next Tree Committee meeting and, if possible, watch the iTree video together; Mary Ellen will look into this. Eliza volunteered to contact the Lexington Tree Committee to learn more about their tree survey; Greg will contact the Cambridge Tree Committee.

Publicity

It was decided that publicity should be regularly discussed and planned as part of the agenda. Monthly submissions (i.e., to the Advocate) might be hard to sustain, however, and committee members felt that publicity

should be addressed as the opportunity arises. Possible topics include: winter moth, tree planting sites, Asian longhorned beetle workshop, Arbor Day.

Eliza suggested that we encourage the Robbins and Fox libraries to feature tree-related displays for Arbor Day, April 27.

NSTAR/State of the Trees

NSTAR was recently allowed back into Arlington on a trial basis for street tree pruning on Gray Street, between Endicott Road and Pleasant Street. It was found that NSTAR's and the Tree Warden's differing views on pruning could not be reconciled, and the crew was asked to stop pruning. A meeting of Town officials and NSTAR representatives is planned for Friday, January 13.

Amendment of Chapter 87 (General Law of Massachusetts, Chapter 87, Shade Trees)

Greg had a conversation with the Trees for Watertown contact. The issue is unresolved as of yet, but might be by the end of the month.

Asian Longhorned Beetle Workshop

Corinna reported that the event will most likely take place on Saturday afternoon, May 19, in the main Room of the Arlington Senior Center. She will email the committee when the date is confirmed. At next month's meeting, the committee will discuss the event, including how to promote it.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 8, Selectmen's Hearing Room, Town Hall, 7:00 pm