



West Newbury Tree Committee

Location: Remote on Zoom
Thursday January 18, 2024

Present: Fred Chanania, Chair; Molly Hawkins, Co-Chair; Claudia Woods, Public Relations; Dianna Denning

Minutes

Started 5:30 pm	
November Meeting Minutes	Motioned to accept and seconded, voted unanimously to approve.
Update on Ash Tree Removal and Risk Mitigation	<p>Fred reported about a meeting in early January with Butch Hills, Tree Warden, and Katelyn Bradstreet, DPW Administrative Assistant. Butch and Katelyn had identified all roadway ash trees by street location and have created priority groups for removal of dead/dying trees based on proximity of trees. Plans are to go out soon for a \$50K (or so) bid for a tree removal pilot project to see how many ash trees can be removed for that amount of money. Fred indicated that there is also a priority-setting effort to determine higher risk priority groups by the amount of foot and auto traffic on streets.</p> <p>A follow-up meeting on other risk mitigation policies is scheduled for Thursday Jan. 25 at 9:15 Town Office Bdg. TC members are invited. Fred indicated that Butch and Katelyn had already done a lot to address risk concerns, particularly with respect to resident contacts about trees that may present a hazard.</p> <p>Discussion also led to a decision for Action Item: Claudia and Fred to put together a fact sheet on the current status of ash tree removal and future plans. This fact sheet would be sent out via town email and social media by Claudia.</p> <p>Discussion about how to gain the most from the downed ash wood occurred, including the possibility of mobile sawmills and planking. Action Item: Molly and Claudia are to investigate different options that other entities are using. Fred indicated his opinion that the pilot project should go forward in the near term so that information could be available as soon as possible about a broader program to address the remaining ash trees needing removal in time for a spring meeting article to be written.</p>
Arbor Day Seedling Ordering	<p>Fred reported that the NH nursery was apparently sold out of virtually all stock and had already circulated the MTWFA seedling list as an alternative. Discussion occurred about which species should be ordered as a minimum order is 100 seedlings. The consensus was that White Dogwood should be the first choice and, if the order could be split 50-50, that Winterberry would be ordered as well. Action Item: Diana is to contact MTWFA to determine if a 50-50 split is possible and to arrange for ordering via the DPW Admin. Assistant. 100 seedlings is the appropriate order amount. Action Item: Fred will contact Bartletts Tree Experts about ordering a few different species for distribution at Arbor Day and</p>

	will contact DPW about obtaining seedling pots and planting soils.
Tree Ordering from Chestnut Ridge	Fred reported that the nursery had indicated they would accept individual orders with a designation that the orders would be part of the West Newbury delivery order. Action Item: Fred will contact the persons on the existing mailing list and provide this information as well as the password to access the availability list. Discussion occurred about the best way to contextualize this program in light of potential ethics issues about favoring one nursery. Action Item: Fred and Claudia will discuss this further to make sure that this project will be appropriately designed to undertake.
Pile Don't Burn Initiative	Fred reported that it was time to launch this nascent project with publicity. Even though this project was presented during the Town Fair in December, much discussion occurred about implementation in a manner that would end up with a net carbon savings, especially with regards to the Town's brush and log piles at Pipestave. Concern about aesthetics and unintended attraction of undesirable animals was voiced. Given the various non-consensus views on how to proceed, uncertainties about the overall benefits, potential implementation challenges, and the lack of clear information on pro's and con's, the consensus was not to promote this project any further. Action Item: Fred will remove the reference to this project from the TC website, and this project will be discontinued.
New Members and Mill Pond Open House	Discussion about potential events for attracting new members resulted in the decision to use Arbor Day as the main event this spring. In addition, social media outreach could also occur in the March-April time frame.
Arbor Day Planning	Information about a poster contest and calendar art contest was mentioned, and the information would be forwarded to Kelly for consideration as a potential children's program for Arbor Day.
Beech Leaf Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted earlier in 2023, Beech Leaf Disease, seems to be present in all areas of West Newbury. It is caused by an invasive nematode, a microscopic worm, that chews the tissues in the bud of next year's leaf. The lethality for beech trees is yet unclear and, at present, there is no known safe and effective treatment that is recommended by state forestry experts. Some tree companies are offering a nematicide treatment that may or may not be effective and that may present significant risks to nearby aquatic systems. Messaging about BLD: The question discussed was when and how to start publicizing the Beech Leaf disease issue in light of the lack of complete scientific and the uncertainties about effective and safe treatment options. The consensus was that letting people know soon that this problem exists may help people understand what is happening to their beech trees and may help people make good decisions about arranging for treatments that may or may not work. Two options were discussed: (1) a simple statement about the presence of the problem and directing residents to official state DCR and UMass websites for more information; or (2) a somewhat more detailed statement about the nature of the problem with some cautions about using treatment methods that have not yet been fully

	<p>approved as safe and effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Item: Fred will draft the two versions for consideration by the TC at next month's meeting with the goal of disseminating any information by springtime.
Tree City Recertification	Fred reported that the recertification application had been submitted to Mass DCR and review/approval should occur in the next month or so.
Upcoming Training Opportunities	<p>Fred had previously circulated by email to members of the TC four items of potential interest with links to obtain further information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two workshops by UMass Extension: Jan. 30 - pollinator topics \$35; Feb.6 - tree and shrub insects \$55 • UMass Extension Conference on Managing Tree Systems in a Changing Climate (\$75) - Feb. 27 • Mass. Arborist Association Meeting - Beech Leaf Disease (\$85) - Feb. 27
Other items not anticipated	Fred reported that a "Quick Guide" to selecting climate-friendly and native trees to plant had been prepared and posted on the TC website and had also been sent directly to Selectboard member Rick Parker (who had asked about this topic). Action Item: Fred will resend this Guide to all TC members.
Next meeting February 15, 2024 at 5:30 (remote)	Adjournment at 6:55 pm