

Nantucket Tree Advisory Committee

Posted meeting of November 16, 2023 at 3:00 PM

DPW Conference room, 188 Madaket Rd, with Zoom
Connectivity

Draft Minutes for Review and approval

Attendance: Dave Champoux (Tree Warden), Mary Longacre, Judy Deutsch (via zoom) Ben Champoux (via Zoom); Charlie Polachi, DPW Staff and Drew Patnode DPW Director

Absent: Whitfield Bourne, Dale Gary (Town Arborist)

1. Call to Order
Dave Champoux called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and listed all in attendance.
2. Committee Acceptance of Agenda
Agenda was unanimously accepted
3. Committee approval of Minutes from 10/19/2023
Minutes from 10/19/23 were approved and accepted unanimously.
4. Announcements
No announcements were made
5. Public Comment
Stephanie Bradford and Kevin Toth joined the meeting as members of the public. Stephanie asked if a fine had been levied for the tree at 126 Main street. Dave Champoux stated that a fine had not been levied, but the builder has agreed to pay any fine imposed. Dave Champoux said that the fine process is being reviewed to follow proper procedures, as he has never had to use it. Ben Champoux stated the Builder is very cooperative and willing to work with the Tree Advisory Committee.
6. Citizen/Departmental requests
No Requests were made
7. Old Business
By-law discussion:
Dave Champoux asked Drew Patnode for an update regarding the tree bylaws. Drew Patnode indicated that he has spoken with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager about it and at a first glance it appears that MGL. States that a max fine is \$500. Charlie Polachi stated he has reached out to the town of Lexington tree warden about their fee structure but has had no

response. Dave Champoux stated that the previous DPW director had started the process of increasing the fine and that the tree advisory committee would like to see the fin increased and a penalty structure that deters people from illegally pruning or cutting of a town tree altogether and raised the question as to whether the cutting or pruning of a town tree could be classified as vandalism, with a potential criminal charge to carry a heavier weight than a monetary fine.

Drew Patnode asked if the removal of a town tree could be penalized as destruction of town property just as in the case of the fountain on main street. Mary Longacre explained that she had come across a bill to allow towns to recoup attorney fees in cases where there was a capped fee, she would continue to look into the bill, and Tree Committee should look to incorporate attorney fees into the fines. Drew Patnode mentioned there may be existing cases to support criminal charges and sited the poisoning of the trees on the Auburn University campus.

GIS Mapping:

Mary Longacre stated that this process has been started many times, but it is unclear what has happened to the data. Dave Champoux suggested that the committee keep on the PLUS department on getting the Data into the GIS mapping system. Dave Champoux also stated that Dale Gary had located the easements for the elms along Hooper Farm Rd. Drew Patnode recommended that we get the documents scanned into the DPW system.

Drew Patnode also stated that the Committee should have as much information as possible before approaching Town administration and Town Council on fee structure changes. Ben Champoux said he would look into getting advice on the matter from a professor at UMASS whom he knows and asked about adding Tree Committee sign off on to the permit process. Mary Longacre stated that she had spoken with Leslie Snell from PLUS and she was reluctant to add trees into the mix of permits. Mary Longacre suggested that a brochure from the Tree Committee could be placed at the PLUS counter. Charlie Polachi made the suggestion that PLUS could add a line to the permit to have the home owner contact the Tree Warden or Town Arborist to have the property checked for town trees, keeping the burden on the homeowner or builder and not the PLUS staff.

The group discussed and emphasized the importance of Dales knowledge, getting it properly recorded and agreed that Will Dell'Erba was the best candidate for the job as he possessed the specialized skills required for the mapping project. Ben Champoux stated that if Will cannot do the recording that it is necessary to find a way to keep the project moving forward and believes there is a large amount of data yet to be uploaded. Charlie Polachi said he would connect with Dell'Erba about the information he had collected about the GPS unit needed to continue the tree mapping.

8. New Business

Dave Champoux read an anonymous letter that he had received in regards to work previously denied at 44 Union Street possibly being completed. Champoux reaffirmed the Tree Committees opposition to the project and that no permission had been given to do any work, he also reminded the group that cutting of tree roots is pruning. Dave Champoux recapped the onsite meeting from a year or more ago with himself, Ben Champoux, Dale Gary, former Committee member Mike Misurelli and Jim Cook from Bartlett Tree where both a full foundation and helical piers were discussed and rejected by the Tree Committee. The group agreed to monitor the property closely for any work.

Mary Longacre expressed concerns about the sewer project and wanted to know how it was being

monitored. She also noted that the storage of equipment at the base of trees and asked if anything was planned to help those trees after construction. Dave Champoux stated we should keep an eye on it and that deep root feeding or air spading might be appropriate and that Dale has been monitoring the progress and has not seen much damage. Dave Champoux shared that there was a lot of damage done to the island's elm population back in the 30's and 40's during the first sewer main project. Drew Patnode will stress the importance of tree health with the town hired engineer who is monitoring the project.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:48 with Mary Longacres Motion, Seconded by Judy Deutsch and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by:

Charlie Polachi

Next Meeting Scheduled December 21 at 3:00pm in the DPW Conference room with zoom available.