

Nantucket Tree Advisory Committee

Posted meeting of January 18th, 2024 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 (via zoom), Judy Deutsch (via zoom) Ben Champoux (via Zoom) Whitfield Bourne (joined via Zoom @3:52); Dale Gary (Town Arborist), Scott Williams (DPW Staff), Charlie Polachi (DPW Staff)

1. Call to Order
Dave Champoux called the meeting to order at 3:08pm and listed all in attendance.
2. Committee Acceptance of Agenda
Agenda was unanimously accepted
3. Committee approval of Minutes from 11/17/2023
Minutes from 11/17/23 were approved and accepted unanimously.
4. Announcements
No announcements were made.
5. Public Comment
Andrea Bradford asked about the elm tree at 126 Main Street, inquiring about what was being done to protect it from furth damage, and what is being done to help it after the root damage that occurred. Dale assured her that he checks the tree daily, and as soon as he is able to he will perform so weight reduction of the tree. Dale stated that Bartlett tree is signed up to deep root feed the tree when the timing is appropriate, later in spring after April 15th per the town's fertilizer regulations.
6. Citizen/Departmental requests
No Requests were made.
7. Old Business

Further Discussion of Mitigation payments and fines for illegal tree removal. Judy Deutch stated that she was intrigued about the idea of penalizing the contractor, as it may carry more weight than penalizing the homeowner. Dave Champoux liked the idea but said ultimately the homeowner should be responsible. Dale Gary suggested that the best way to make people responsible is to

make them aware when they buy a property that it has a town tree on it. Dave Champoux stated that he and Dale had most recently been dealing with the new owners of Easton Guest House, who wanted to remove a large town owned Elm, going so far as to try and hire a local contractor. Dave Champoux stated that fortunately "Dale has put the fear of God in most people here" and everyone backed off of the project due to it being a town elm, and the owner abandoned the removal.

Dave Champoux started the conversation about fines and mitigation, concluding that the statute of fines is there and is most interested about Mitigation fees. Charlie Polachi suggested that because of the uniqueness of our American Elms being irreplaceable, that the penalty for taking down or pruning an Elm be on a different scale than that of other town trees. The Committee decided to increase the fine from \$300 to the maximum \$500 as allowed by state law. Once fine and mitigation fees are established and vetted through town council the committee will prepare a form letter to aid in notification and enforcement of penalties and fines. The committee will also seek guidance from town council on the proper procedure for the implementation of the fines and fees.

After much discussion of possible fines and fees the committee settled on \$1800.00 per caliper inch DBH for all non-American Elm town owned trees and \$25,000.00 per caliper inch DBH for all American Elm Trees. Charlie Polachi will draft and circulate the new fee structure to the Committee members to review for the February meeting.

Mary Longacre advised that at a previous select board meeting it was discussed what power the Board had to set regulations that do not require town meeting, but it is best to seek the advice of town council as how best to proceed.

Ben Champoux Stated that he has been in contact with a supplier for tree medallions, who can supply the town with enough medallions to complete marking all the town owned trees and that he would follow up with the company. Scott Williams, stated that he and Dale have approximately 30 medallions they will be working to install in the coming weeks.

Dave Champoux asked Scott for a report on the sewer project and how it is progressing and if they have found any tree or root damage along the route. Scott reported that they construction has been doing a good job of avoiding the tree roots in the road.

Mary Longacre updated the committee that she had spoken with Andrew Vorce as to how best to move forward with moving the sidewalk away from the historic elms at 8 and 12 Atlantic Ave, back to where the path has been "worn" on to private property. The First step is approaching the homeowner to see if they would give the town permission to build and maintain the sidewalk on their property. Mary Longacre said Andrew suggested this might be the best time to approach the subject as the sewer project is currently working in the area. DPW to coordinate with the sewer department on the inquiry with homeowners and completing the work.

Scott Williams reported that outside of the large Elm at the Silver street parking lot, there was not much storm damage to report.

8. New Business

Mary Longacre presented an Elm tree planted in the sidewalk at 15 Pleasant Street, showing the disruption to the sidewalk and questioned whether the practice of planting in the sidewalk is something we should continue to do. Dave Champoux agree that it is indeed a catch 22, that it is problematic but questioned what the street scape should be. Dave also suggested that moving forward more care should be taken to choose trees with a more vertical rooting habit, and agreed that planting on private property would be the best route to take.

Judy Deutsch asked if there are indeed trees that have a more vertical rooting structure, that could be recommended for future plantings. Ben Champoux stated there was a lot of discussion when main street reconstruction projects started to appear about better methodologies to street tree plantings as far a site preparation to be able to provide the trees the space they need to grow without disrupting the infrastructure in urban environments.

9. Adjournment

Dave Champoux called for a motion to Adjourn the meeting at 3:56, which was unanimously accepted.

Respectfully submitted by:

Charlie Polachi

Next Meeting Scheduled February 15th at 3:00pm in the DPW Conference room with zoom available.

NOTE: There will be a Public Hearing on the removal of a Tree at 39 Hooper Farm Road that will commence at 2:30 February 15th at the DPW conference room with zoom available.