

Barre City Tree Stewardship Committee - Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting (Virtual)
December 9, 2020 at 5:00 pm-6:00pm (Every Second Wednesday of Month)

Committee Members Present: Amanda Garland, Nate Ebert, Amy Galford, Conor Teal
City Staff Present: Jeff Bergeron, Tree Warden

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Amanda called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Changes to Agenda

No changes to agenda.

3. Approve Minutes of last Regular Meeting

Minutes approved.

4. Announcements

No announcements.

5. Budget Review and Update from Jeff Bergeron, Tree Warden

Committee first discussed the permanent metal tree guards that the committee wishes to purchase and install around newly planted Main Street Trees. Amanda would like two guard test models and then consider a local fabricator to build for another dozen or more trees downtown.

Jeff and his team found some low-cost tree guards for sale by an online retailer for \$211 each and wanted the committee's opinion on whether to buy the minimum order amount to install these as tests. He would like to purchase this month for installation as soon as possible. Also mentioned that the guards are adjustable, able to widen as the tree grows.

Amy: Asked about the installation process and how it would be installed into the ground.

Jeff: He said there are ways to spike it into the soil, no other base framing needed.

Amanda: Asked if there are temporary methods for guarding the trees not covered by the initial guards. Are there materials that the City isn't using to protect the current trees?

Jeff: Will ask support teams in his department to see about protecting them.

Committee all agreed on getting the tree guards installed as soon as possible since the sidewalk plows will be in use next month. The committee gave support for Jeff to ask local fabricators for cost estimates to create similar tree guards and said that he can purchase the

minimum order of tree guards from the online vendor by pulling funds from the Shade Tree Fund.

Amanda: Suggested the Little Leaf Linden at Mathewson Playground and newly planted (Fall 2020) Main Street Trees as the first candidates.

Jeff: Reported on current available funds: General Fund \$10000 annual, \$4200 left. Shade Tree Fund: \$26000. Likely another \$5000 coming in July. Pruning costs can come from Shade Tree Fund.

Committee discussed further on low-tech methods to protect Main Street Trees. Jeff will talk to Street Department for options, but is unsure if he'll have funds for time spent installing them.

Nate: Suggested the option to put 3-4 stakes around the tree and then wrap burlap around it; the design protects against wind damage as well.

Jeff: Is in favor of the burlap design.

Committee agreed that it would look decent enough, noticeable to the plows, and familiar to the public for its common use in protecting hedges from snow.

Action Item #1: Jeff will order 2-3 tree guards and acquire burlap to use for temporary protection of Main Street Trees. Will also contact local fabricators for cost estimates for other tree guards.

6. Main Street Trees Discussion: Pruning Schedule/Tree Guards/Spring Planting

Committee discussed a potential pruning schedule for the Winter/Spring.

Amanda would like a plan for how to schedule pruning projects and who would be doing the work. Would like another pruning training workshop with city staff.

Jeff: Recommended picking a day to scope out critical ones from Tree Inventory, essentially building an updated inventory to prioritize pruning. Knows of 2 Old Growth Maples that are in critical condition and should be taken down soon.

Amy: Asked if some can be scoped out in winter?

Nate: Suggested that just doing the scope out on the trees in the spring would offer more accurate data and better results. He said it's difficult to see the base in the snow and wants to see leafing to better judge the health of the limbs.

Jeff: Recommends that the committee lead the inventory scoping. City staffing has other priorities to focus on and additional work may not be available in their budget.

Action Item #2: Committee will review current inventory and plan for another inventory scoping day in the spring.

7. City Tree Nursery Planning

Amanda: No updates on possible siting at the High School yet. Asked how members of the committee want to be involved. Looking over the secured grant proposal, she seems ready to purchase materials soon.

Jeff asked if there is still interest in using land by the City-owned Reservoir, but liked the idea of placing the tree nursery near the High School if it was approved. The committee explained the discussion and conclusions from the previous regular meeting about the benefits of locating the nursery closer to residents of Barre City (accessibility being the highest benefit).

Nate: Still offered to provide a few more loads of wood chips. He also mentioned a client who has expressed interest in helping out on the nursery and attending future committee meetings.

The committee welcomed the potential of another volunteer to help with the project.

Action Item #3: Amanda will share document about nursery grant funding/parameters with the committee and with Jeff.

8. Outreach Discussion

Amanda asked the committee about possible methods of conducting outreach to community members as well as methods to improve the committee website.

Conor: Reiterated the importance of known contacts with interests in tree management or making an ask to the general public of joining a contact list of volunteers for the committee. Mentioned that the committee can do updates on projects through Front Porch Forum.

Amy: Collected informational websites about trees, mostly Vermont-based organizations and is placing those in a shared document to the committee for consideration in posting on the committee website. Examples of: general information on Vermont trees, Identification tips, planting best practices, etc. In her search, she discovered that the County Forester (Department of Forest, Parks, Recreation) is a Barre City resident and she would like to invite him to the next meeting. The committee agreed that the County Forester may be interested in our recent endeavors and could offer insights in tree management in local area forests.

Action Item #4: Amy will share document about informational website links to the committee for consideration. Committee will review links and comment on appropriate options. Committee will decide at next meeting on which ones to post on website.

9. Update on Committee Goals and Action Items

The committee recalled the goals/action items that are in-progress: more robust website, selecting spring inventory priorities, tree nursery development, tree guards, pruning schedule.

Jeff: Thanked Nate for providing wood chips on various projects.

10. Adjourn

Committee adjourned at 5:55 pm.