

Barre City Tree Stewardship Committee - Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting (Tree Nursery on Reservoir Road)
July 14, 2021 at 5:30 pm-6:30pm (Every Second Wednesday of Month)

Committee Members present: Amanda Garland, Amy Galford, Nate Ebert, Conor Teal
City Staff Present: Jeff Bergeron
Guests: Steve Micheli, Barre City Public Works; Ellen Sivret

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Amanda called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

2. Water for the tree nursery

Steve Micheli, Barre City Public Works, discussed some options for water access for the tree nursery. There should be a large plastic tank (~350 gallons) that can be moved down to the nursery. Committee was given permission to periodically run a hose from a hydrant up the hill down to the tank to fill it periodically. We will likely need to build a platform for the tank, which could be a student project in the early fall.

Action item: Jeff will talk to other city staff to continue searching for appropriate materials to set up the water tank.

3. Health of some specific city trees

Ellen inquired about assessing the health of the ash tree at Matthewson Playground, which provides shade for a bench, and whether it needs to be pruned after some damage. Nate explained that ash trees in our area are likely to succumb to Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) unless they are given pesticide treatments, so we probably don't need to put a lot of effort into pruning it except for safety concerns. Ellen said she would appreciate at least having an inspection of the tree.

Jeff mentioned that Steve McKenzie had asked Bill Ahearn and Jeff to work on a list of high priority trees for inspection and safety concerns to be assessed by an arborist, and this ash tree could be added to the list.

Action item: Jeff will determine if this ash tree is on the list and consider it for inspection.

4. Emerald Ash Borer traps

Amanda was contacted about identifying locations for two EAB monitoring traps soon. They will be hung high up and come with some educational signage. Committee consensus was to place them at Matthewson Playground and on the career center / high school campus.

Action item: Amanda to confirm the EAB monitoring trap locations.

5. Website

Amy has been working on the website updates to split the Committee site into some subpages and add informational links and a place to add information about events. She will try to send that information to Jody and the committee tomorrow. Committee consensus to wait on posting information about some statute updates until we have had more time to review them. Amy also brought to the Committee's attention about the Tree Warden list and that Jeff's designation still needs to be added.

Action item: Amy to send Jeff link to have his name added to the state list of tree wardens.

6. Nursery event recap from Sat. 7/3

Despite the late rescheduling, holiday weekend, and rain, the Committee had several attendees in addition to several committee members. The Committee thanks: Ginger, Sen. Andrew Perchlik, Michael & Pam and their daughter for attending. Attendees inspected saplings, spread wood chip mulch, and dug another trench to fill with soil and trees. Another thanks to Nate's Foxfire Tree Care for their free wood chip donation.

7. Next tree plantings and tree nursery tasks

350VT group contacted Amanda offering more trees in the fall; they approved the consideration that most of the trees would be grown at the nursery to be moved to the City at a later time.

Committee inspected current nursery trees and discussed a mix of replacements for trees not starting too well and some new species added. Committee is also considering fruit trees, if possible to acquire, and transplanting some to a city property impacted by a landslide and currently being used as an informal neighborhood park. Consensus to request these if they are on the list of choices: hackberries, swamp oaks, sycamores, yellowwood, redbud, fruit trees.

Also discussed adding finer mesh fencing on the outside near the bottom of the nursery fence and wood chips on the inside for rodent control. Amy recommended this as another student project for the fall.

Action item: Amanda to follow up with 350VT.

Action item: Amanda and Jeff to figure out purchasing materials for the fencing project.

8. Main St Trees and Tree Guards

Jeff told the committee that Elijah Morgan was hired recently as an engineering technician for the city, and was interested in the tree guard design problem. He came up with a design and sketch that may work as a combination tree guard fence and bike rack. The committee encouraged Jeff to move ahead with that project, utilizing a local machine shop for any fabrication needed. Additional protections may be considered to prevent salt penetration in the winter.

Action item: Jeff to keep making progress on acquiring at least one tree guard for a test installation.

9. Oak trees for potential replanting

The committee looked at some oak trees on city property near the tree nursery that are getting a bit crowded but still small enough to transplant to the community garden on Brook St.

Action item: Jeff and Amanda will continue to work on that project for the garden committee with advice from Nate on root excavation.

10. Next Committee Meeting Planning

Committee discussed not hosting an August meeting as other committees do in the summer, confirming that most projects will occur in the fall and limited work over the next month. Watering may occur at the Nursery if there is a long stretch of dry days in August. Committee drafted the Sept. agenda.

Amanda added a reminder that the Committee consider looking at the Hilltop Ave landslide area for potential tree plantings in the fall, the City owns a couple lots in that area.

Action item: Committee members to check out city lots on Hilltop Ave.

11. Adjourn

Committee adjourned at 6:28 pm.