

DRAFT
Trees for Watertown Minutes
Board Meeting
March 15, 2017
Sasaki Associates, 64 Pleasant Street

TFW board members present: Jane Holden, Genie Johnston, Bob Lauricella, Libby Shaw, Michele Waldman. Absent: Dennis Duff, David Jay
TFW members present: Patrick Fairbairn, David Meshoulam
Guests present: Ozzie Bateman, Michelle Cokonougher, Sharon Cook, Carol Jean Smith

The minutes of the February meeting (prepared by Bob Lauricella) were accepted unanimously after amended by Michele Waldman regarding correction: the Sienna Village Condo Corporation will pay for watering trees planted on condo lawns. (Jane Holden moved to accept and Michele Waldman seconded.)

The informal **Treasurer's report** was that there had been no expenditures and two new memberships.

Libby gave a **President's report** summarizing the meetings she attended this month on behalf of TFW. These were a Conservation Committee meeting March 1st; Cambridge City Council meeting March 6; meetings with Tree Warden Chris Hayward February 22 and March 1; a public forum with State Senator Will Brownsberger and State Representative Michael Barrett on February 18. Also attended the 2017 UMass Community Tree Conference in Amherst on March 7 - the topic was "Communities and Urban Trees - Partnerships in Practice."

Libby thanked the many TFW members who had reached out to Watertown government officials, Cambridge and the media regarding **tree removals along Linear Park** in February. As a result of this pressure, the Cambridge Water Department will retain for now two significant trees along the stretch where trees were removed. Northern Tree will grind all stumps and repair surface ruts and damage. In the future no trees will be removed without video evidence that roots have penetrated the pipeline and Cambridge will give 48 hours notice to Chris Hayward. A map of the whole length of the conduit has been obtained and Chris Hayward will provide a more detailed map soon.

The Conservation Commission meeting included a **developer presentation on the Arsenal Yards** development along Greenough Boulevard. Chris Jones, principal landscape architect from the firm of CRJA-IBI (aka Carroll Johnson), stated that the project will be removing 20 trees but intends to replace them. He was asked to reconsider planting balsam fir and red maple since Libby and committee member Patrick Fairbairn had expressed skepticism that they would do well in the long term due to climate change. Bob Lauricella asked Patrick Fairbairn why the contractor couldn't reconfigure the ramp down to the river to take up less space, eliminate the stairs, or to move them closer to Talbot Avenue. It was conceded that the developer probably wants to have fewer trees visible from the condos so that the river is more visible as a marketing strategy. Bob Lauricella noted that the developer originally had a road leading into the project from Greenough Boulevard but abandoned that in order to get the special permit.

The issue of a **tree ordinance** was raised at the Conservation Commission but Chris Hayward and Town Planner Steve Magoon doubted it could be effectively enforced since Chris' duties already exceed his time, wearing "three hats" with distinct responsibilities. Tonight Michelle Cokonougher proposed not a separate tree ordinance, but an amendment to zoning as it relates to trees, which could be easier to get accepted and enforce. Michele will put together some language to tighten existing zoning to be more protective of trees.

Libby's meetings with Chris Hayward addressed the Linear Park situation, soil testing, and the CVS failed "rain garden" (stagnant standing water). Bob Lauricella inquired if CVS had addressed our earlier issues. Libby said the dead arbovitae were replaced in mid-July but not watered and some had already died by September.

Michele Waldman reported that the two trees going in at **Sienna Village** due to her efforts are a sugar maple and a "Snow Goose" cherry. Tree species for the third site not selected yet.

Jane reported that she forwarded to Chris Hayward five sites on **Cypress Street** where residents stated they would be receptive to trees being planted this spring.

David M went to a local environmental action meeting at Northeastern, met Cambridge tree activist Susan Labandibar. They shared enthusiasm for a **gathering of tree committees in the Greater Boston area** to discuss best practices. He has also talked with Newton Tree Conservancy members.

Genie gave an update on the **tree nursery** saying that we are paid up for Grove St for the upcoming season but that she would like TFW to move the nursery to the new garden location after this summer. Libby questioned whether it would be wise to move the Osage Oranges twice but Genie will only be moving small, easily transplanted ones. David M asked about Black Tupelo as a possible nursery species but was told that they are commercially available.

David M brought a list of dates he had researched when the library could host our **TFW "Day of Engagement."** This program will show a movie ("Trees in Trouble"), possibly have an upbeat speaker (possibly Dan Jaffe from Garden in the Woods), introduce David's Google Tree map app, provide refreshments and activities for kids and have a TFW membership drive. A short Annual Meeting will precede the other more public events. Jane would like to use this day to introduce the "Find the Biggest Trees" contest which she will also take into the schools. At this time the morning of Saturday May 6th seems the most likely date. Sharon Cook has spoken to the high school guidance department and thinks there would be volunteers from the high school to help with a kids activity. The students could count these hours toward the required community service hours. Carol Jean said we should reach out to the Atrium School also. Libby thought the idea of community service hours might also fit in well with a Water by Bike program should we adopt one similar to Cambridge's.

Ozzie brought along an outline of what he, Sharon and Jane had talked about concerning improving the appearance of the three planting beds in front of the **7/11 in Coolidge Square**. Lowering the tall sign and getting 7/11 to pay for the hardscape of curbing and a bench would be necessary. Trees for Watertown would purchase the three trees that would be planted. Libby reminded the group that it is not in TFW's mission to plant other than tree materials. Ozzie will work up a diagram to present to the store and a rough estimate of costs to them.

Patrick Fairbairn wondered how the Conservation Commission could help TFW. There will be a new CC member after Marylouise Pallotta McDermott retires this year. Libby thought that Chris Hayward could use help updating the town's tree inventory, perhaps the new Commission member would be willing to take that responsibility on.

David M recommended a book: **Jill Jonnes, "Urban Forests: a natural history of trees in the American cityscape" (2016)**

The meeting ended at 8:45.

Submitted by Jane Holden, TFW Secretary