

Trees for Watertown Board Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2017
Sasaki Associates, 64 Pleasant Street
DRAFT

Board members present: Dennis Duff, David Jay, Genie Johnson, Bob Lauricella, David Meshoulam, Libby Shaw, Michele Waldman.

TFW members present: Michelle Cokonougher, Patrick Fairbairn

The December minutes were accepted (Bob moved, Dennis seconded)

The January financial statement was accepted (Dennis moved, Bob seconded)

January 23 Meeting with Watertown Tree Warden

Watertown doesn't currently have a Tree Warden or a strong TW candidate. David Jay, Bob Lauricella, Libby Shaw and Michele Waldman met with DCPD Director Steve Magoon to urge Watertown to redistribute Historic Preservation responsibilities so that going forward, the TW job description puts strongest emphasis on Tree Warden responsibilities and allows enough time to carry those out. Libby provided a handout giving key responsibilities of the TW job (TW position talking points.pdf). We understood Patrick Fairbairn, Conservation Commission member, had provided a list of justifications for emphasizing Tree Warden responsibilities over Conservation Agent responsibilities.

MicheleW summarized the meeting: Steve said possibilities for formal change in the Tree Warden job description are constrained by union concerns. The sense we had was that Steve understands the need, could shift job responsibilities within the Planning Office to guarantee the majority of the Tree Warden's time can be focussed on urban forestry; and would do a new round of advertising that emphasized Tree Warden responsibilities and qualifications. Our further sense was that TW authority over pruning contractors in non-emergency situations could be negotiated, so that the TW position better serves the intent and legal responsibilities of the role of Tree Warden under the Mass. Shade Tree Act. Patrick said he would propose the Conservation Commission discuss the Tree Warden position at their next meeting.

385-393 Pleasant Street

Libby thinks the long forested berm's ecosystem services could not be preserved or recreated if the berm were eliminated. If a way can't be found to preserve the berm then mitigation options should be proposed. The Special Permit review will continue at the March 7 Planning Board meeting.

Reaching out to Town Councilors and DPW

The board discussed inviting Town Councilors to our monthly meetings. Consensus was that this is a good idea, also to invite DPW Head Gerry Mee. Best to invite one Councilor at a time to avoid violating the Open Meeting Law (Councilors sit three to a subcommittee).

January 17 Stony Brook Conduit Community Meeting

The Cambridge Water Authority made a public presentation in Watertown on their plans for remaining trees along Linear Park. Michelle Cokonougher, David Meshoulam, Elodia Thomas and Libby Shaw attended. It was agreed that Cambridge would conduct a scientific arboricultural test of soundness on the veteran Norway maple before a final decision is made whether to remove it. Two other trees would be removed, and the canopy of another tree cleared out.

Teen Tree Stewards Program

DavidM is looking for advisory volunteers for this expanded program, to help with ideas and fundraising. The Advisory committee currently has four people: former town councilor Susan Falkoff, landscape architect Gina Foglia, Watertown High School principal Shirley Lundberg, and TFW president Libby Shaw. Would be very useful to recruit a business person.

Delta Planning

The question was raised whether CPA funds could be used to landscape the Delta. DavidJ estimated the landscaping cost might be \$100-200K, counting removal of buried pavement. This does not include hardscape additions along the lines Aaron Dushku has proposed.

Library meeting space

The question was raised whether to move TFW meetings to the Library. The library space seems to be too busy to be depended on. DavidM wants to discuss this further.

Support for Libby

The question was raised whether the TFW board could do something to support Libby. Libby said she'd be happy to see an experienced candidate for Treasurer.

Previous Outstanding Items discussed.

It appears that the Coolidge Square 7-Eleven landscaping project is not going ahead.

There seems to be no interest to propose a tree ordinance at this time without a Tree Warden.

The removal of trees at Athena in front of the Theater does not seem to be a concern at this time.

There does not seem to be any development going on on the Masonic Temple at 32 Church Street. Be useful to learn the status of that development since this project came before the town over a year ago, and there is a large white pine at the north side of the property which the developers stated would be saved.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lauricella