

**Trees for Watertown Minutes Board Meeting  
December 13, 2017  
Sasaki Associates, 64 Pleasant Street**

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

TFW members present: Michelle Cokonougher, Michael Moran, Elodia Thomas

The November minutes were accepted (DavidM moved, Genie seconded)

Libby reported on her phone conversation with Chris Hayward, following up on the notification Michael received that Eversource is planning another round of utility pruning in Watertown. Chris was finishing up his first day on the job as Director of Conservation in Needham. He kindly described how during Eversource's previous utility pruning in Watertown, 2-3 years ago, he pre-toured the streets to be pruned with Eversource's arborist, Chris Gonzales. They discussed each tree and made note of specific trees which Chris H wanted to be present for the pruning of. When Eversource's pruning contractor came to Watertown, Chris Gonzales introduced them to Chris H. Chris G was not necessarily on site for the daily work but it was understood that Chris H would be monitoring the work, and the trees selected earlier for special care were not pruned until Chris H was present to oversee that work. This kind of oversight is key to minimizing damage from utility pruning.

The TFW board discussed possible options for how Watertown trees could be protected during Eversource pruning without a Watertown Tree Warden. The best option would be to put off this utility pruning until after a tree warden is hired.

The currently posted Tree Warden job description was discussed, along with some of the issues making it difficult for Watertown to attract a fully qualified urban forestry professional. One big issue: the job description appears unchanged from the three-hatted job Chris filled: Conservation Agent, Historic Preservation Agent and Tree Warden, with a corresponding variety of possible prequalifications.

Should TFW advocate for a tree ordinance when we have no Tree Warden to enforce it? Different towns and cities have very different tree ordinances. Consensus was it could be useful to discuss what we'd like included and how to craft an ordinance. MichelleC will do a little research.

The community leaf-raking effort DavidM and x Ornstein organized went very well. DavidM, Libby and Genie participated over a couple weekends, as did DavidM's daughter Hanna,7, and a number of teens. DavidM calculated there were 15 different rakers, a total of 50 volunteer hours donated, and 144 bags of leaves collected.

**November 20: Mount Auburn Street Community Meeting, to discuss potential MassDOT Complete Streets redesign of Mount Auburn Street.** The full stretch from the Square to Route 2 was divided into four sections with distinctly different characteristics and different Complete Streets design solutions. Another meeting will be scheduled to focus specifically on the Coolidge Square area.

There's Barr Foundation funding for the stretch in front of Star Market and a portion of Watertown.

**November 21: Victory Field Meeting, including landscaping discussion.** Libby advocated for strong oversight to protect existing shade trees during construction.

**November 21 (conflicting): Community Meeting on 33 Mt Auburn Street development.** The corner park is still part of the development consisting of housing, retail and parking.

After numerous public meeting the Arsenal Park will be developed per the request of Boylston Properties. Primarily removing some of the tennis courts and adding lighting.

**November 30: Tree Fund webinar on drought tolerance in trees.** Libby recommends it.

**December 7: Watertown Community Foundation Annual Holiday Party.** There was also a very nice write-up on the TTSP on a table at the entry. DavidM gave a Powerpoint presentation on the TTSP. One teen participant (Noah) was present.

**Upcoming, December 14:**

noon: **Urban Forestry Today webinar** on Pruning Practices to Manage Risk and Enhance Wildlife.

6:30 pm: **Complete Streets Prioritization Plan meeting.**

DavidM collected useful information about how the job of tree warden works and is financed in a few other cities and towns (Belmont, Newton, Waltham, Arlington, Framingham), and presented the data in spreadsheet format. Will continue to collect data from other towns.

About 8 years ago TFW held a guided retreat to reconsider mission and goals and set a strategic plan for the next 5 years. Libby will track down that report. Consensus was we should do this again. DavidM suggested signing up for guidance from an organization called SOAR, a nonprofit consulting company that provides pro bono consulting service. Requires a 3-6 month commitment.

Michele suggested this strategy could work specifically for the TTSP.

DavidM will look for people in town who he can speak to about furthering the TTSP.

TFW will meet to prepare some talking points regarding the future tree warden position.

Libby will look into reserving a meeting room at the Library for this meeting and for TFW's next meeting.

**Previous Outstanding Items**

The "tree ordinance" is under discussion by the city council sub committee

Redesign of 7/11 at Coolidge Square

Delta redesign and proposal

Edenfield tree plantings (the construction is finished)

Follow up on Athena trees in front of Casa de Pedro with Bob Corney

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Lauricella and Libby Shaw