

Trees for Watertown Board Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2018
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: Anita Roy Dobbs, Michelle Cokonougher, Eliot Friedman, Michael Moran, Jolly Tager

Guests present: John Walters, Councilor Ken Woodland.

Ken Woodland, Town Councilor, member of both the Public Works Committee and the Rules & Ordinances Committee, attended tonight's meeting.

KW is going to propose to the Joint Public Works-Rules&Ordinances Committee that Watertown go forward with a goal of increasing the number of shade trees in Watertown. His proposal is to 1. identify how planting priorities will be set, 2. work with town departments to address the feasibility of planting in the selected sites, and also make sure there's sign-off by residents whose houses trees would be in front of; 3. determine how planting projects would be funded - perhaps a one-time expense, or perhaps use the DPW road reconstruction model. Until we get to that stage, can't really say what might be the best way to fund. But if a one-time expense could be in the capital improvement program. Would like to see a multi-pronged approach, very systematic and numbers-driven, checking off each stage before moving to the next. Will be addressed at the next Joint PW-R&O Committee meeting, possibly March 7.

DavidM asked if CPA money can be used for this purpose. Patrick Fairbairn asked this of a CPA program administrator, the answer was it cannot.

MichelleC asked if the open space requirement of Watertown's Zoning Ordinance could address additional trees.

Libby advised that not just planting new trees, but correct planting and appropriate follow-up maintenance, particularly during the first three years, is vitally important to ensure Watertown gets full value out of its public shade tree plantings. Quality of trees and adequate oversight of the planting process will be very important.

Elliot reminded us that Chris Hayward advocated that residents permit public shade trees to be planted on their property rather than in the planting strip. Much better growing conditions. Dennis warned that new owners, especially developers converting a house to condos, frequently cut trees down.

Bob Lauricella asked how the difficulties between the DPW & the Tree Warden can be resolved.

Ken thought the Tree Warden's job is mostly reactive. Bob and others explained that the responsibilities of a Tree Warden need to be much more than that. In other towns Tree Wardens often have their own crew, and work on making sure DPW workers are well trained in planting and care of trees. Public education and working with the larger urban forestry community is also important for improving a city's urban forest over the long term. It would be best if Tree Warden could be separated out from the other parts of this Watertown job description and made full-time, as it really needs to be.

Ken advised that the best way to make a change is to make it a budget priority guideline, and have it ranked accordingly.

During his meeting with TFW, Steve Magoon said he might try to the three-hatted job description for Tree Warden to give it strong appeal to candidates well trained in urban forestry. This job advertisement has been off the town website since early February.

The Arbor Day celebration was discussed. Libby warned that an Arbor Day celebration is a requirement for continued classification of Watertown as a "Tree City USA". This event is usually run by the Tree Warden, but it's looking like Watertown may not have a Tree Warden in time this year. DavidJ volunteered to run an Arbor Day event this year and MichelleC volunteered to assist. DavidJ will consult with Chris Hayward on how Chris ran this in past years, and Libby will make sure TFW's effort is OK with Steve Magoon.

The January minutes were accepted unanimously (Dennis moved, DavidM seconded)

The February financial statement was accepted unanimously (Michele moved, DavidJ seconded)

The board voted unanimously to contribute \$50 to printing costs for the brochure residents in the Westland, Woodleigh and Edgecliff Roads neighborhood have put together to canvas the neighborhood with, with the goal of getting as many shade trees planted as possible during the full depth road reconstruction scheduled for this year.

The 2018 Teens for Trees program was discussed. DavidM needs \$30,000 for this project. So far there's been a donation of \$2000. A proposal for a \$13K grant was sent to the Cabot Family Foundation, should hear in June. DavidM described three funding levels he was looking for donors at, and asked for TFW's help. The board made suggestions of companies he might approach. With the help of a WHS graphic designer he put together a one page brochure, and he is working on a ten-page prospectus. Some criteria for a Teens for Trees town tree inventory were also discussed.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lauricella