

**Trees for Watertown Board Meeting  
Minutes May 23, 2018  
Sasaki Associates, 64 Pleasant Street**

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

TFW members present: Michelle Cokonougher, Anita Roy Dobbs, Elliot Friedman, Katy Wolff  
Guests present: David Farwell, Dylan Hickey

**Teens for Trees participants welcomed**

David Farwell and Dylan Hickey are TFW Teens for Trees Program participants working with David Meshoulam on the Spring phase of the program. David and Dylan talked about their backgrounds and what motivated them to participate in Teens for Trees this summer. Then TFW members each introduced themselves and mentioned what brought them to TFW.

The April minutes were accepted unanimously with two corrections: David Meshoulam was absent for the February meeting, and Stop&Shop on Pleasant Street donated snacks and water (MicheleW moved, Genie seconded).

The May financial statement was accepted unanimously (DavidM moved, DavidJ seconded). MichelleC mentioned that Bob Lauricella donated \$20 toward color printing for the Commanders Mansion Arbor Day Celebration flyers. MichelleC will give Libby a receipt for other printing costs for reimbursement.

**Arbor Day 2018 Celebrations**

Both the April 26 Commanders Mansion celebration Michelle Cokonougher organized, and the May 1 Hosmer School Arbor Day celebration with Honey Crisp apple tree planting David Jay organized, were very successful. Both events were terrifically well organized, the weather was great both days, and participants were enthusiastic.

After a subsequent town council meeting, the Town Manager joined the rest of us in thanking and complementing Michelle for the great job she did organizing the Commander's Mansion event. Libby also thanked Bob for critical support to Michelle in this effort, e.g. transportation and getting food into her at key times.

The photos teachers took at the Hosmer event show what a happy event that was. Leo's Landscaping had put the apple tree in the ground earlier, and with David and Judy Fallows' help, fourth grade students got to finish the tree planting. Many students took home Kousa dogwood seedlings, and a few instead got to take home pussy willow seedlings which David brought to augment the dogwood seedling supply.

Great press coverage was provided on site at both events by Charlie Breitrose of WatertownMaNews, and a videographer from WCATV did an excellent interview piece at the Commander's Mansion. Kerry Feltner of the Watertown Tab kindly published photos after both events.

**April 27: Rope-climbing in a tree**

Thanks to the kind offer by Joe Buck of an afternoon of his rope-climbing expertise and the offer of a big backyard oak by Gideon Schreiber, DavidM, Gideon, their daughters, David's wife Becka and Libby each had the opportunity to scale a tree with ropes and see Watertown from oak-tree-canopy height.

**May 1: FY2019 Budget proposes full-time Forestry Supervisor/Tree Warden position**

A full time Tree Warden position with oversight over forestry staff has long been sought by TFW and other concerned Watertown community members. This new position will be in the DPW. The job description won't be posted until the FY2019 DPW budget is formally approved. Libby has asked Cambridge City Arborist David Lefcourt and Brookline Tree Warden/Conservation Director Tom Brady if they can provide us with their job descriptions, which may detail the breadth of skills and abilities needed to steward a 21st

Century urban forest.

**May 5: Watertown Helps Out Day - TFW Tree Hunt to populate the interactive Watertown Tree Map**

Libby led a group of four tree hunters on a 90-minute walk in the morning, and Libby and DavidM led a group of twelve in the afternoon. There were families in both groups. The weather was great, and we had a great time recording photos and comments about trees that participants particularly liked, to add to the tree map. *See the map at [bit.ly/watertown\\_trees](http://bit.ly/watertown_trees). Please add your favorite trees! Email pix, location and your comments about each tree to [treesforwatertownma@gmail.com](mailto:treesforwatertownma@gmail.com).*

**May 14: Mount Auburn Street Open House presentation**

Libby attended just before this open house ended at 6 pm. WorldTech designers said existing healthy trees along Mount Auburn Street would be preserved. Libby and DPW Head Jerry Mee took the opportunity to chat together about trees, the new Tree Warden position, and the benefits of direct communication between DPW and TFW. Libby said Jerry wants to see public shade trees planted more carefully, and agrees that the full time position should help ensure better oversight. Libby asked Jerry to compliment Bob Dirico on the careful mulching done for trees along Mount Auburn in recent weeks. MicheleW suggested we invite Jerry to a TFW meeting.

**Teens for Trees Program update**

A group of WHS teens under the supervision Visual Arts Instructor Dan Dresser accepted DavidM's request to come up with designs for a 2018TFT logo. Anita, Libby and Gina Foglia gave feedback on the designs. DavidM presented the preferred design to the TFW board, who made a few further suggestions. Will be tweaked a bit more.

Deborah Peterson assisted DavidM in interviewing candidates for 2018TFT program evaluator. The consensus was to hire Evan Kuras, a graduating UMass Amherst Masters in Education student who seems experienced and competent. Libby and David will draw up a consulting contract. Total remuneration will be \$1500, in three payments based on milestones met.

Fundraising hasn't met the program's full \$32,284 budget needs. DavidM proposed a couple lower-budget alternatives. With several program aspects eliminated, with several students working pro bono, and with David cutting his stipend, the program could run on a bare-bones budget of \$17,244. Several teens are OK with working pro bono. There are currently 9 applicants for 12 positions.

The TFW board suggested some businesspeople it might be helpful for DavidM to approach for more funding. Libby is working on getting a nonprofit PayPal account for TFT fundraising. DavidJ proposed a 3-fold brochure to advertise the program to prospective corporate donors.

Bob proposed a "we contributed to TFW-TFT" sticker that shopkeepers could put in their window.

Concern was expressed that the stripped-down program might be boring for teens. DavidM said WHS students he interviewed were really excited to see what Arlington has done with their inventory data, and want to help achieve that for Watertown.

It was proposed that free USDA i-Tree software be used rather than \$2534/year OpenTreeMap software. DavidM responded that even David Bloniarz, principal USDA proponent for the excellent i-Tree software suite, steers people away from using i-Tree for inventory data collection. DavidM also said that based on its OpenTreeMap reporting, Arlington tripled its tree planting budget in a single year.

Concern was expressed that TFT students may not be able to complete the inventory by the end of the summer. Board consensus was that if data collection is planned carefully, even results from a partial inventory could be valuable for Watertown planners. Libby said both this concern and this conclusion were also expressed at the Town Council meeting when the joint PW/R&O committee report on tree management was read into the record.

The TFW board agreed that participating in the inventory during or after the TFT program could be a great opportunity for community engagement for adults too. And even if the town ends up not using the collected data for some reason, all participants will be better informed about the importance of urban trees.

Concern was expressed about quality control of inventory data collected by non-experts. Bob volunteered to review collected data for data quality.

The meeting ended ~ 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Lauricella, Secretary