

Trees for Watertown Board Meeting Minutes
March 21, 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, Michael Moran

Teens for Trees Program

DavidM is recruiting at the High School, and is working with high school graphics students on a T4T logo. He met with Councilor Ken Woodland to discuss how T4T can support the town.

An updated public shade tree survey and tree canopy analysis would be a high priority deliverable, hugely valuable in planning for Watertown's urban forest. The board discussed how this might be achieved at length.

Watertown's current tree inventory is TreeKeeper, a software product leased from Davey Tree Company. It includes some 4500 trees, including empty sites. Chris provided TFW with a spreadsheet printout of TreeKeeper data last summer.

TreeKeeper has no public interface, and is not used promptly and routinely by DPW staff. Ideally DPW tree inventory updates would be merged easily with DPW's work order input system.

Important to make sure TFW works with the town, not parallel to the town on this inventory.

The database created should include just basic info - species, variety, simple assessment of condition, diameter at breast height (DBH). The input interface should be easy to train teens to use, and measurements taken should be easy to accomplish without error.

The database be easy for Watertown's future Tree Warden to merge the data into whatever database he/she plans to use going forward.

Another valuable data resource is satellite-image-based canopy mapping. Last year DavidM prepared a map of existing Watertown tree canopy density that showed clearly which parts of Watertown were canopy rich and which were canopy poor. This analysis was based on USGS LIDAR satellite imagery with 30 meter resolution.

Important to prepare a well-thought-through presentation on the proposed T4T inventory process to the joint Public Works-Rules&Ordinances committee when the committee next meets.

DavidM is discussing T4T funding with potential patrons. Unfortunately TFW's first big application, to the Cabot Family Foundation, fell through. He is making a presentation to the Rotary Club and meeting with banks, has a meeting with WSB Friday. Mark Dawson of Sasaki is interested in efforts to educate middle and high school students around issues in landscape planning, but the new Sasaki Foundation is not taking applications until Fall. Bob Airasian is interested, and gave David names of real estate people to talk with. We will apply to WCF for a grant to TFT, though it's not clear who to interface with since WCF still has no executive director. David will also discuss the possibility of T4T participant internships with Adrian Eaton, administrator of the WCF internship program at the high school.

David and Anita Roy Dobbs are working on a TFT webpage that will have info on the program, a place for students to apply, and information on making donations. Libby is working on a Paypal button for the webpage.

David, Libby and Anita are working on a fundraising letter to TFW members and friends.

Arbor Day plans

In the absence of a Tree Warden, and given the importance of Arbor Day activities in maintaining Watertown's status as a Tree City USA, David Jay volunteered to organize a school event with a tree planting. Michelle Cokonougher volunteered to look into organizing a Commander's Mansion event.

Tree Warden position update

Hiring for this position is stalled. The Conservation Committee recommended separating the Tree Warden's functions from the other two responsibilities. It would be helpful to the town for TFW to complete the spreadsheet DavidM began, which describes training, salary, and responsibilities of Tree Wardens in urban communities comparable to Watertown. Would also be helpful to include info about the inventory software each city is using. The Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Assn has a spreadsheet database of Mass. Tree Wardens on line which could be helpful, particularly the contact info. At Libby's request MichelleC is considering taking on this research and outreach task.

Watertown Helps Out, May 5

WHO organizer Darshna Varia, co-president of the WCF, invited TFW to offer an activity during this annual opportunity for citizens to volunteer for community service. The board considered a tree planting, but consensus was this would be too much a spectator experience rather than an opportunity for volunteers to join in. Board decided to host an activity to identify notable trees in Watertown: an introduction to the Tree Map App, followed by a group walk to discover trees to input to the Watertown map. Could do two sessions, morning and afternoon. DavidM and Libby will arrange.

385-392 Pleasant Street Development

Libby and MichelleC attended the Planning Board meeting on March 19 at which the Planning Board voted to grant Steven Collins, Manager, Amstel Heritage Watertown, a Special Permit to destroy the forested berm on this site and move forward with their development. Libby spoke again against this destruction of important natural environment. The developer's landscape architect, Blair Hines, invited Libby and other interested TFW members to meet with him to discuss the planned landscaping. Libby will arrange this meeting.

The board voted unanimously to reimburse DavidM for the registration cost for his and Genie's attendance at this year's UMass Community Trees Conference.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lauricella