

Trees for Watertown Board Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2018 APPROVED
Sasaki Associates, 64 Pleasant Street

Board members present: Genie Johnson, Bob Lauricella, David Meshoulam, Libby Shaw, Michele Waldman. Absent: Dennis J. Duff, David Jay
TFW members present: Michelle Cokonougher, Anita Roy Dobbs, Patrick Fairbairn, Gina Foglia

The May minutes were accepted unanimously with two corrections to recorded names (Michele moved, Genie seconded).

The June financial statement was discussed and accepted unanimously (Michele moved, Bob seconded).

Saturday, June 2: Watertown Walks nature walk along Charles River led by Genie

This was a very informative stroll thanks to Genie's detailed knowledge about the natural history of plants and animals we saw along the way. Genie has been closely observing the trees along the Charles since 2002. In that time there's been substantial tree growth as well as tree decline.

Bob, Libby, and TFW members Jeff Bail and Maureen Murphy and their twin toddlers came for the walk, as did a couple other Watertownians (Natalie included).

Monday, June 18: Arsenal Parks Design Presentation (Community Meeting)

The amount of money the developer proposed originally to contribute to improving Arsenal Park was \$500K, it now seems to be an indeterminate amount. No amount was committed.

The current Arsenal Park design shows the Community Garden area downsized, and surrounded by sports activity areas. Genie advises Watertown needs better space for Community Gardening, demand is growing,

Arsenal Yards presented a proposal to increase the height allowed by zoning for the RMUD. There's significant back and forth in the community about this proposed height increase, which would not only raise the tower currently proposed for the AY property but permit other tall towers within the RMUD.

MichelleC mentioned article reporting 8 cherry trees in Boston Garden which were removed after doing poorly in new shade from new buildings.

Teens for Trees Program starts

DavidM said the ice cream social at Sasaki welcoming the teens and the T4T Program was a great success. Teens and company employees talked together over ice cream. Several landscape designers from Sasaki and from VHB were enthusiastic about working on helping collect data for the tree inventory and on helping process and present the resulting information in useful map format.

DCR Urban Forester Mollie Freilicher put together a great Tree Identification Powerpoint. DCR Urban Forester Julie Coop will come use this to help train the teens in tree ID. DavidM will send tonight's attendees Mollie's PowerPoint, can be used to help train other inventory workers as needed in future.

80 Elm Street Development Community Meeting

About 15 people attended the meeting, including MichelleC and Councilors Angie Kounelis, Tony Palomba and Lisa Feltner. The owner proposed a Self Storage building with mixed use on the first floor. The proposed building has minimal setback from Elm Street, minimal to no room for shade trees.

DavidM introduced the T4T T-shirt design and consulted with the board on details.

Tree inventory

DavidM demonstrate the OpenTreeMap software. Strengths and limitations of the data format and collection protocol were discussed.

With Sasaki's help the "Massachusetts Planar" location data in Watertown's database was bulk-converted to latitude and longitude, with very precise results when checked in the field, so that the locations of trees in Watertown's 2008 inventory with Chris Hayward's additions can be input to the OpenTreeMap database. The rest of the data on existing trees on these sites will be entered during the inventory.

Data collection began on the west side of Summer Street. Sense is that many trees present in 2008 when the earlier inventory was done are now gone. We need to make sure soil volume provided for street trees is adequate.

Be valuable to be able to display change in canopy over time, with location granularity. Limitation: OpenTreeMap notes date a record was last updated but not what was updated.

Teens will recommend sites for new trees. Many factors determine appropriateness of sites - filtering will be done at a later time by DPW and our new Tree Warden. Some neighbors object to new trees (e.g. several neighbors on Edenfield) but others are inspired to ask for new trees (e.g. several neighbors on Irma Ave, after Irma renovation was completed).

Libby will be away on vacation from June 30 to July 15.

There was a sobering article on the decline of tree canopy in Boston in the Boston Globe. DavidM testified at the Boston City Council meeting to discuss the canopy decline.

Given the activity this summer the TFW board plans to meet on July 18 and on August 15.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Lauricella