

Tree Task Force Minutes
March 6, 2024 - 6:30
Town Hall Conference Room

Attendance Kristen Dorsey, Earl Gibson, Eric Horne, Tyler Kolle, Sophia Wilson

Updates

Maine Beer Co. (Tyler)- Met with Dave Love, MBCo.'s Sustainability Manager at the Park and Ride. Once a month the volunteer cleanup crew checks the area. They are very willing to help plant and maintain the two trees that were planted in the Fall and future understory plantings.

Wild Seed Project (Kristen)- emailing with Tyler Refsland, Manager of Applied Ecology Planting Collaborations : "... should first emphasize that our strategy as a small non-profit has shifted somewhat since planting the Maine Beer Company space. We've moved away from a nursery and landscaper role and towards more of a consultant role (and limited supplier of native plants). We'd be happy to informally consult on a recommended set of native plants given the site conditions. This can be done quickly over email or Zoom and depending on the quantity of plants needed, we can also advise on where to source the plants. If you'd like us to visit the site and provide a more in-depth consultation, then we can discuss drafting up a contract for my colleague Emily Baisden (Seed Center Director, cc'ed) to come out later this spring (while I'm on leave). A contract would also be needed if you're interested in getting live plants from us. I don't want to exclude the possibility, but we typically finalize our propagation schedule in December for the following year, so at this stage I can't guarantee what species and quantity of native plants will be available for planting in fall 2024. We also predominately propagate herbaceous perennials, so we often recommend sourcing woody plants from nurseries that specialize in trees and shrubs (e.g., Fedco, Pierson, New England Wetland Plants, Native Plant Trust). " So it would be more streamlined for TTF to instead partner with Audubon for species selection and native plant sourcing for the Park and Ride. Build that relationship and hopefully continue that for future projects such as the peddler park behind Starbucks, Bartol Library, town hall woodlot, etc.

Complete Streets Feedback (Kristen) - The former Peddler's site at corner of Bow and Middle Street, it was discovered a few years back, is owned by L.L.Bean. Andy Seymour is the Bean liaison who is usually in attendance at CS meetings, but was absent. We would need to reach out to him to inquire about a collaboration to upgrade that privately held site. Also proposed the 'pocket park' behind Starbucks, to which Complete Streets was receptive- it's a space the town has known needs upgrading. Two peddler permits have been approved for the coming season: Dale Baker hotdogs, Lily's cart. Talked about establishing specific spots for each cart (now they plunk 'em wherever), create a path for pedestrian flow, then work the landscape around those stationary elements. This may be a location to work with Audubon on. Adam will bring it to Sophie, because there are outstanding technicalities: gas and electric underground/ electric overhead. Will need to define scope/ have a base plan. This is a possible location to apply for Momentum Grant if wanting unique features such as standing tables/desks or artistic elements, etc.

Bartol Library Tree Removal/ Replant (Earl) - Earl removed the Linden tree at the end of February; will also remove stump/roots, repair the sidewalk. We did discuss lopping the roots, but he worries that the tree would have become unstable in strong storms, AND... it just serendipitously happens that the Freeport Women's Club contacted Earl to say they will be donating a Ginkgo tree to recognize their 100th anniversary; it's a good fit for that space. That side street is also under scrutiny due to sidewalk width and the built-out addition which obstructs original sidewalk line. Town is negotiating with a new lease for this building... uncertain if TC is still considering a sale.

Climate Action Plan - In the final phase of inserting public comment/other board and town staff input. TTF membership should consider speaking in support of the Plan when public meetings begin.

New Business

Sophia Wilson - She has received copies of our documents: Project Canopy executive summary, Tree Program Tree, Management Plan draft, proposed Zoning amendments. Reiterated that we are an ad hoc group tasked to develop the Plan/Program, which will then serve as the Policy. Sophia will get us on a March or April Town Council agenda to give another annual report out and receive advice on suggested changes. This will occur under 'Other Business'; TC would accept as an 'Order'. Regarding our proposed Zoning amendments, Sophia suggested that we stay abreast of the development of the Comprehensive Plan (Planning Board) to press the idea of protecting tree canopy; then Council will consider regulatory ways to do that. Spur other individuals to give input. Next year's Capital Program, begin projects ex: Starbuck's Park.

Budget (Earl)- Jessica is not in favor of creating a Capital account. Earl misunderstood the distribution of tree-specific funds (\$7000.00/ 2% per capita) when first allocated to DPW; he recently spoke with Peter to get clarification. A very expensive year so far due to storm damage. He has a meeting this month with Melanie Sachs re: 295 corridor. Earl has identified, concurs with us, that Depot Street as an area needs trees replaced and has room for new ones- we'll prioritize that, and move slowly on other "pocket park" concepts.

Single Tree Planting Sites -

-stumps exist: ~18" in diameter on the corner of Grove/Depot Streets; ~12" diameter on the grassy strip on the west side of Depot below church lot, and a very unhealthy tree about 20 feet away.

-Tree lawns with no overhead power line interference and room for trees: Gap Main Street frontage in front of Gap- is that ROW?; Freeport Heirlooms has room for one more tree between parking lot and sidewalk; Grove Street embankment along parking lots has room for trees; the bend in Depot Street across from Mallet Building is a larger grassy area with overhead line clearance; the bump-out near entrance of the Bean lot on Depot; Mill Street across from parking garage entrance (one ~ 12" DBH tree exists, room for one more)

-problematic tree: Main Street in front of Polo, jammed into a power pole and growing into the lines; 4 trees in raised wells in front of Bike, Boat, Ski- these are not canopy species nor well maintained: are these in the ROW?; grassy lawn at head of former Morse Street has space for trees.

Tree Management Plan- final edits on hold until we are moved forward by the Town Council.

Next Steps

Kristen will: contact Andrew Tufts at Audubon; send our Recommended Tree Species list to Earl; and follow up with him about specific Depot Street tree planting sites/ contracting to have this happen in the Spring.

Next Meeting April 3

Meeting adjourned at 7:50