

**City of Essex Junction
Tree Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting
September 19, 2023**

Members Present: Nick Meyer, Warren Spinner, Rich Boyers, Nicole Klett, Steve Rivard

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm by Warren, second by Nicole.

II. Additions or Amendments to Agenda

No additions or amendments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the August 2023 meeting minutes was made by Nick, second by Nicole.

IV. Greatest Tree Contest

Rich and Nicole have been working on kick off of contest. Flyers were distributed to physical businesses, library and EJRP. Ashley has been working on digital PR including our platforms and The Essex Reporter. Rich and Nicole have reached out to local schools. Also, Nick will speak with others he knows in the schools and community. Ask Ashley about PR quota for this month and highlight the \$100 dollars to get more entries.

The team can go around to judge on October 5th with time to be determined and Rich and Nicole will work on docs for judges that include rating the tree and story separately and averaging out a score per tree with names removed for judges.

V. Proposal for Maple Street

Students of Essex High School submitted a proposal for Maple Street Park walk and committee has reviewed and is in agreement that the walk is in need of updating.

TAC would like trees more identifiable but have to be weary of public setting. Would we use a QR code for the entire map and for info on tree facts, conservation and climate change. Need aluminum (or plastic) tags at a uniform height on the tree to make it easier for public to find but also to last. Convs on EJRP with modifying sign, putting on QR code on it and continuing to work synergistically.

Next steps: Ask ADL, EHS and other schools and science teachers to see what they would like in Maple Street Park for educational purposes. Enlist students, teachers, citizens or the committee to work on content for website. Ask Ashley about the QR/website featuring a map and facts. Ask a design teacher about longer lasting more visible tags for trees. Revisit at next meeting.

VII. Meeting with Chris Yuen: enforcement and review of development applications

Warren and Nick had a meeting with the planning director for EJ. Chris is sharing apps coming in for land development to see what role tree species and landscaping plans the TAC could give

feedback on for projects. Most private but some public right of way. TAC would assist in making sure landscaping works for the site.

Nick brought in two plans that are being reviewed on Thursday. (The process includes having the developer develop a concept and run it by the design review board and then tweak the plan based on what is allowed/required. Need a full landscape plan and landscape architect needed if the project is over a certain budget.)

One project is lot at Railroad St near Essex Agency in the village district and then residential is right next to it requiring a buffer that would be a 3 story multi-unit building with little landscaping concept at this time.

Another project on Pearl Street without landscaping detail as yet.

There has been success in landscaping refreshment in the development off Pearl Street with Big Lots after a pause in landscaping attention.

VIII. Planting

Plans remain the same as last meeting. Still open for planting sites.

IX. Tree Warden

Rick Jones sends notifications on whether things need to be done for trees. Lavoie and Cushing Property Managers have had meetings with HOA and they are asking about trimming trees again after 3 years ago. Would need help from an external private party and will put this out to bid.

Pine Tree on Brickyard Rd that is near the culvert and EJ will take care of that tree that needs to come down.

Rick Hamlin shared with Warren that designer of the new Railroad Station was wondering about an arborist and tree protections. TAC planted trees in the area years ago and will want to protect those through this development. Warren plans to speak with them especially if trees have to be removed and asking for compensation.

X. Other Business

Half a million will be the amount Urban Forestry to distribute to state for projects.

XI. Date for Next Meeting

The Committee will meet on October 17 at 5:00 p.m

Adjournment

Rich made a motion to adjourn at 6:42 p.m. 2nd Warren.

January -Planning Calendar
February -Public Education around Tree Work/Trimming (Winter is the time to reach out to arborist)-HOLD for 2024
March -Public Education around Thinking about planting a tree?
April - Potential Tree Keeper Training/Dip and Bag 28th and Tree Sale 29th/National Arbor Day 28th
May -Tree Planting 6th/VT Arbor Day 5th/Hiawatha
June -Tree Walk 3rd
July -Public Education around Tree Planting/Maintenance/Watering
August -Advertise Tree Contest
September -Form Submission for Tree Contest open after Labor Day
October -Judging and Announcement of Tree Contest Winner
November -Public Education around Trees in Fall (Best Handling of Leaves, etc)
December -Public Education around Tree Decorating/Tradition of Cutting down Christmas Tree