

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 20, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nick Meyer, Rich Boyers, Paula DeMichele, Warren Spinner

ADMINISTRATION: Darby Mayville, Community Relations and Economic Development Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 PM by Nick.

2. ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Nick asked to add The Development of a Committee Work Plan to the agenda.

MOTION by RICH, SECOND by PAULA, to amend the agenda. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. MINUTES REVIEW

Nick stated that he had not reviewed the minutes, and other members stated that they had not either. Therefore, they choose to table the April minutes review.

4. ARBOR DAY UPDATE

Rich said that this event went very well. He said that the event received press coverage from both the Burlington Free Press and the Essex Reporter. Roughly 25 parents attended.

Rich asked if it would be possible to get a planting tub for the new tree?

Nick said that the Village had purchased 15 tubs last year, and that they were being stored at the Public Works garage. He did not think that it would be a problem. He reminded Rich that the tubs do get clogged, and need to be cleaned regularly.

5. TREE PLANTING 2014

Nick said that six trees were picked up and planted by Jamie and Phil of Public Works on May 12th. He said that the trees appear to be doing very well. All of the trees were planted on Main Street. Nick and Development Director, Robin Pierce both reached out to Fairpoint to see if they would allow plantings on their property to no avail. Nick says that he plans to wait a few months and try again.

The committee began to discuss future planting locations. Warren said that there are some dead trees on Pearl Street that could be replaced. He reminded the committee that residential areas should also not be ignored when considering potential areas to plant street trees.

Nick suggested looking at the Village Center area, especially Railroad Avenue. He said that all the wiring on this street is underground, and as a result large trees are not a problem in this location.

The committee decided that they needed to decide which areas to focus on as a part of the master plan process.

Nick mentioned that the inventory identified good planting locations, and suggested that the committee do a walk-through of these areas in the future.

Warren asked Nick for an update on the Five Corners construction project at the former People's United Bank site.

Nick said that they are waiting on Act 250 approval. One of the conditions for this is the approval of a landscape plan. The applicant is supposed to be working with the Village planning department on developing this. This information will be provided to the Planning Commission once it is available.

Warren said that developers in Burlington are strongly pushed to include adequate plantings, and he hopes that Essex Junction is able to do the same.

Nick mentioned that all trees planted as a part of a landscape plan must be replanted if they die within three years. Paula suggested that this be revisited in the future, to determine if there could be a provision to replant trees that are very close to dying, but not actually dead.

The committee decided to revisit the tree planting issues at Post Office Square, which they had discussed at their previous meeting. Nick said that he recently found out that they were required to plant shade trees when the parking lot was renovated. This was not done. He is unsure what will happen as a result of this. Warren said that he spoke with the owner, and recommended a good brand of planters to use for his future planting needs.

6. MULTI USE SAFETY PATH

Darby informed the committee that there has been little progress with this project since their last meeting. She said that the project was taking longer than expected, and that she would keep the committee updated as it progresses.

7. CARING FOR CANOPY GRANT PROGRESS

Warren asked if there was any additional grant money that the committee could use to plant trees this year?

Nick said that there was not, but that the committee would have planting funds at the start of the new fiscal year on July 1st.

Paula asked for clarification regarding what types of activities would be covered by the Caring for Canopy grant funds?

Nick said that this grant would cover pruning and the creation of a master plan. A separate funding source will cover the completion of a street tree inventory.

Nick informed the committee that we had applied for a Caring for Canopy Mini Grant, but that this was rejected. Despite this, the Urban & Community Forestry program is still planning on providing the Village with an intern for the summer. It was easier for this request to not be awarded through a formal grant.

Paula asked where the funding from this program came from?

Warren said that it was mostly federal funds, with minimal state funds.

Nick stated that Rick Jones said he will begin the pruning process after Memorial Day. Warren said that he would be able to assist with a contract, if needed.

8. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Nick said that it is important for the committee to focus in on their highest priorities, so that they are able to accomplish as much as possible.

Warren asked if the committee should continue to meet monthly?

Nick said that the committee seems to be accomplishing a lot with their monthly meetings, and wants to stay with this for now.

Warren suggested having a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. He thought that it would be helpful for everyone to meet one another and share ideas.

Nick said that this was a good idea, but should be done after the Planning Commission is finished updating the Comprehensive Plan.

Paula asked for more information on what the Comprehensive Plan is, and how it might affect the committee?

Nick said that it was a general planning document. He suggested that the committee instead review the landscaping section in the Land Development Code.

Warren then suggested establishing a planting plan as a part of the master plan, which will address both public and private property. He said that a master plan could help Essex Junction become a Tree City USA. All agreed that this was a good goal.

Warren stated that it is important for the committee to create a budget for the \$10,000 that they have to spend during the next fiscal year on tree planting. Darby said that she would confirm with Robin and Rick which department the money was housed in, and the level of input that the committee would have in regards to spending it.

Nick stated that he thought that it would be helpful to have Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent attend the committee's next meeting. This would be helpful to review the budget (both for planting and pruning) and for Rick to give an overview of the inventory system of the committee. The next meeting was moved to 3:30 PM, on June 16th in order to allow Rick to attend.

Warren said that he also thinks that it is important for the committee to consider how they relate with municipal departments, state offices, and possibly even federal offices as a part of their master plan process.

Warren said that he would send a master plan template to the committee for their review. He said that Burlington recently added an emergency management section in their plan.

9. PUBLIC INPUT & COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Paula informed the committee that she would like to discuss with the committee an initiative that Sustainable Williston recently started. They are working on something called the Birth Tree Project, where a tree is planted for each baby that is born to parents who are living in Williston. Williston has roughly 55-60 births per year. The trees are not publically funded, but are purchased by the parents who then plant them on their own property.

Nick suggested that the committee work on bringing awareness of emerald boor disease. He said that it could be something as simple as placing purple ribbons around elm trees to let the public know how many there are in the area. Warren suggested including information in the Essex Reporter. He also mentioned that there would be a training on this issue at Essex High School in June.

Rich mentioned that UVM students had put QR codes on elm trees in Centennial Woods. There was some discussion regarding how the codes were able to be physically affixed to the tree. He said that he would find out more information and share it with the committee at a future meeting.

10. MEETING SCHEDULE

Next meeting

- June 16th at 3:30 PM

Agenda Items

- Minutes review.

- Presentation from Public Works Superintendent Rick Jones on tree care budget & overview of tree inventory programming.
- Canopy Grant update.
- Tree planting updates.
- Update on potential summer intern.
- Public input.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by RICH, SECOND by WARREN, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville