

MINUTES SUBJECT TO CORRECTION BY THE ESSEX JUNCTION TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 16, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nick Meyer, Rich Boyers, Warren Spinner

ADMINISTRATION: Darby Mayville, Community Relations and Economic Development Assistant, Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent

OTHERS: Mandy St. Hilaire and Elise Schadler (State of Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 PM by Nick.

2. ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

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 and May minutes review for the next meeting.

4. UPDATE FROM URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Elise began by bringing up the new tree inventory system up on the computer screen for the group to see. She said that the committee would be the first group in the state to use this new system. This system is much more user friendly and clearer than the previous one. Elise showed the committee how the new program is able to visually show the location of tree on a maps, and that they are color coded by condition. This program can be used offline, such as on a smartphone while in the field, and then be later synced to the system. There is also a free phone app available for download.

Unlike the previous system, trees can be labeled by street name and number. Pictures can also be uploaded to each entry. However, there is no way to save a history of tree consultations. This must be manually uploaded in the comments section. Elise said that an Excel printout of the database could be made available if needed.

Nick asked if we could add fields to the drop-down menu?

Elise said that this would not be possible, as these fields are the same for all of the communities that use the software. Changing them for one community would change them for all the communities.

The eventual goal for this software is for all of the street tree data (for all Vermont towns using this software) to be accessible as a mapping layer on the Agency of Natural Resources website.

Mandy said that one of her first tasks in her internship would be updating the street names listed in the database. She asked that any plantings or other tree activities that have been completed in the past year be sent to her. Nick said that pruning had not started for the year, but that he would send her information on the trees that were recently planted. He said that Public Works and the Tree Committee will be beginning to visit potentially poor condition trees shortly.

Mandy mentioned that she had met with Warren today to review Burlington's Tree Management Plan. She is hoping to use this as a template for Essex Junction.

Elise said that Burlington's plan was good to look at, but that it is also important to remember the ways in which Essex Junction is unique. Mandy mentioned that she would send the committee copies of the Tree Management Plans in Pittsburgh and Gray Maine, which she thought were very good. She also mentioned that the app itree canopy could be used in the inventory process. This could be used to calculate tree percentage figures.

Mandy said that she is working on establishing a project scope and goals for her internship. She said that a master plan is considered to be a more long-term project, while a management plan is more of a short term project.

Rich asked if one or the other would be considered more favorably when applying for grants?

Warren said no, most grant applications are just looking to make sure that some type of plan is present.

Warren suggested that Mandy add information on the benefits of trees in the executive summary of the plan, as well as a brief description of all of the chapters. He said that the plan should touch on maintenance, the different groups involved with tree care, and the tree inventory. He also suggested adding a chapter on budgetary information. This can be changed as support for planting increases.

Mandy will be organizing the draft tree policy. She asked the group how accessible they wanted it to be to the average person. All agreed that they wanted it as accessible as possible. Warren suggested adding an emergency management section, to include climate change and emerald ash issues.

Mandy will be beginning the inventory on Monday. Rick mentioned that the Village was responsible for maintaining the tree canopy in certain open spaces near Wilkinson Drive. He said that he would give her the information needed to add these trees to the inventory.

The group agreed that this plan would need to be approved by the Village Trustees, and that there would be several public meetings to engage citizens in this process. Elise said that this would be a great time to connect with other interested parties.

Mandy mentioned that she enjoyed outreach projects. Nick suggested having a booth at the Farmer's Market. She suggested doing a short survey here, or asking people to tell stories about their favorite tree. This would be a good venue to recruit new members. Rich suggested creating an info sheet that was easy to understand. He suggested a magnet or calendar so that people would hang onto it.

5. TREE PLANTING 2014

The group began to discuss the idea of creating a tree management plan for the parks areas. Rich said that it would be important to engage the schools in this process. All agreed that there are several parks areas that are in need of serious work. Rick mentioned that EJRP does have a budget for tree removal and maintenance, and offered to connect with to learn more about how they use it.

6. CARING FOR CANOPY GRANT PROGRESS

Nick said that there is roughly \$5,000 available for tree pruning in the Village, and that he thought that it is important to get started soon. Warren said that pruning typically costs between \$1,000 and \$1300 per day. He suggested that Public Works complete some of the easier jobs.

Nick suggested that the committee work to create a press release to let citizens know that the Village would be trimming public trees in a neighborhood.

7. PRESENTATION FROM RICK JONES

Rick said that he is working on getting another part-time employee for the summer. He mentioned that the Tree Advisory Committee's budget is housed in Public Works. There is \$10,000 for streetscape improvements, and \$6,000 for tree removal (for problematic trees).

8. PUBLIC INPUT

None.

9. MEETING SCHEDULE

Next meeting

- June 15th at 6 PM

Agenda Items

- Minutes review;
- Tree Inventory Update;
- Tree Pruning Update;
- Management Plan Update;
- Planning for Outreach at Farmer's Market;

- Public Input.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by RICH, SECOND by NICK, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville