

**Village of Essex Junction
Tree Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting
August 16, 2022**

Members Present: Nick Meyer, Warren Spinner, Steve Rivard, Sheridan Johnson, Tim Kemerer, Rich Boyers

Community Guest: Max Seaton

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 by Nick.

II. Additions or Amendments to Agenda

No additions or amendments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The approval of the April meeting minutes will be held over to the September meeting.

IV. State of the Trees This Growing Season

Warren reported that the trees that were recently planted are all doing well, except for one. He noted that Public Works has done a great job watering throughout the summer.

VI. Fall Planting 2022 and Spring 2023

Nick reported that there are about 35 trees that can be pulled from the BOB nursery for spring and fall planting. Nick indicated that, according to the building codes, trees damaged during construction near the shopping center on Pearl Street should be replaced by the property owner. Nick discussed other potential planting locations including on Old Colchester Road. Steve suggested tree planting west of Sunoco Station on Route 15. Tim inquired about additional plantings on Wilkinson St. Warren responded that more ash trees need to be removed before more trees can be planted. Nick shared that the North Creek Condo Association inquired about tree plantings on the Mansfield/Brickyard location. Sheridan asked about whether there are opportunities for individuals to suggest planting locations on their property. Rich commented that a key criterion for planting on private property is that it must contribute to the streetscape.

VI. Pocket Park and Land Development Code Update

Nick shared that the city hired a landscape architect to design the pocket park in front of Firebird Cafe and appointed a committee to work with him. The committee sent a survey out to the community and the key priorities conveyed by the survey were that people want trees, shade, and a place to sit. The soil will be tested at specific locations on the site to determine if there is contamination, and based on these findings a plan for remediation will be developed. The

landscape architect will provide three potential designs for the site and the city will select one from these options.

Nick conveyed that the land development code is complete and all recommendations from the Tree Advisory Committee were accepted. There will be one or two public meetings before the codes are adopted. With the new building review structure, the Tree Advisory Committee will be working with the Design Review Board. Tim inquired about the process for code enforcement. Nick noted that Tree Advisory Committee has been under Community Development but will now fall under Parks. Warren shared that this is the structure in Burlington. Several committee members raised questions related to resources, budget, and maintenance.

VII. Tree Contest

Rich shared his thoughts for an Essex Junction Tree Contest, similar to the one run by Branch Out Burlington. The contest might be entitled The Essex Junction Greatest Tree Contest with one open-ended category in which participants consider what makes a tree great. It could be its size, shape, location, use, story, or anything else that speaks to someone. Participants could submit their entries through a Google form and they could include a link to a photo and a brief description of the tree and an explanation of what makes it "great."

The Committee discussed possible times to launch the contest. Around Arbor Day was one suggestion. Local businesses could be solicited to sponsor the contest and offer prizes. Rich will connect with the city's PR person to see how they might help to utilize social media and move this initiative forward

VIII. Public Engagement

Warren discussed a tree walk within some of the city's historical neighborhoods. He suggested that this could be combined with a historical buildings walk. Perhaps someone like Tim Jermain would be open to collaborating on this. Early October was suggested as a possible time.

XI. Date for Next Meeting and Adjournment

Tim made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Steve. The next meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2022.

