

Lexington Tree Committee Minutes 4.11.24

1. Meeting called to order at 7:33 AM. Present: members Gerry Paul, Mark Connor (co-chair), Pat Moyer (co-chair and minutes), Barbara Tarrh, Gavin Grant, Nancy Sofen, Jim Wood. Also present: David Pinsonneault, DPW, Charles Hornig, Charlie Wyman, Joe Pato (SB representative), Rachel Summers. Abbie McCabe was a guest from Planning.
2. Minutes of 3.14.24 were accepted unanimously.
3. Ongoing dialogue with Dave P. about items of mutual concern.
 - a. Arbor Day will be 4/26 in Antony Park. DPW will plant a tree. All TC members welcome and encouraged to attend. Dave asked someone from the Tree Committee to speak, perhaps about new bylaw changes, other committee work. Likely Chris will speak about the setback planting process and results. Of the 500 tree saplings Dave has ordered for give-away, he approved our having 50 white oak, 50 hornbeam, 50 redbuds for our own purposes.

- b. The University of Vermont will answer additional questions we and the town posed about their canopy study for \$15-20K, which money Dave has approved from next fiscal year budget (ie will be done after 7/1.)
- c. The tree inventory update will be complete by Forestry staff by 5/1.

Emery Park may not get the 2 Kentucky Coffee trees after all. The center-charette report suggested more of a multi function area—leaving more space open.

Quoting from the report:

Emery Park needs attention. It has the potential to be an active “people’s place” dedicated to Lexington’s multiple publics while being reframed by higher density housing or office uses on its east and west sides. Given the historic character of the Depot Building, this would have to be accomplished with great sensitivity to its special attributes.

Emery Park: Although Emery Park is a lovely greenspace, it could be considered underutilized from the standpoint of what the potential utilization could be based upon the Square's location in Lexington's Center.

- o This is particularly true in the winter months when the grass and landscaped areas of the park are utilized significantly less.*

- o Adding an appropriate amount of additional hardscape to Emery Park would offer flexibility for year-round utilization and the potential for family-oriented park features to encourage longer visits in the downtown area.*

The Select Board will vote on this 2 weeks hence.

The 3 inch Kentucky coffee trees would be planted somewhere else if not in Emery Park.

d. Dave will send us the Hazard Trees Removed report, and the report on spending from the Tree

- Fund, tomorrow. Currently the balance is \$328,211. He explained that this money is earmarked for trees, planting, and after care. Town Meeting has limited spending to \$70K, then \$90 K in the past, this fiscal year the limit is \$120K.
- e. London plane trees at Diamond planted too closely by school department: Shawn Newell is talking to Foti about a move of “some”. (3) this spring.
 - f. Nancy Sofen pointed to some “mulch volcanoes” on (?) center streetscape, Dave will inspect.
4. The Tree Committee unanimously supports the application of Rachel Summers and Alicia Morris to the committee as associate members. Pat will let the Select Board secretary know.
5. We reviewed most recent landscape plans for the development at Meriam and Edgewood with Abby, planning director. We made recommendations, which she appreciated. (Nancy Sofen took recommendations to the Planning Board on the evening of this meeting and reported:

I will send the statement to the Planning Board for their records - but before I even spoke (and they

did ask me to speak, so the statement was read publicly) Gary Larson, the landscape architect, said that he'd spoken with Abby this afternoon and that they will comply with all our requests, and listed what they'd do.

He said that buried stormwater systems prevent them from planting along Merriam St., but they will add 2 shade trees at the corner. The numbers of inches removed and to be planted have changed and I couldn't follow exactly what happened, but he stated that they'll make every effort to achieve full mitigation (and maybe more) through planting, but if that's not possible payment would be made to the tree fund.

They haven't yet discussed waiver of the Tree Bylaw. I'm very happy with this response.

We debated if the Tree Bylaw should be waived for this project, allowing the Planning Board oversight of replanting and mitigation payments. Some committee members wondered about how the PB enforces its recommendations? Abby: depends on the experience with the builder; someone from PB keeps an eye out, neighbors. If bylaw waived, we called strongly for preservation of large trees, and (as in recent update to article 34) an arborist be hired to certify hazard trees and provide tree protection plan.

6. Articles 33-37 all passed with greater than 90% support at Town Meeting within the last week. Dave's request for an associate director was approved. We will ask Dave for this person's job description. Hearty thanks to Nancy and to all who worked diligently for months on crafting our articles 34-36.
7. Trees for the 250th celebration. See item 3a above. A subcommittee of Gavin, Barbara, Rachel and Pat suggests that we give some of the 150 tree starts to Harrington graduating fifth graders (Gavin has a connection there, which he will activate shortly), and the rest we will give away at Discovery Day in late May. The DPW will store the items safely until we need them. We discussed using tree tags..would DPW fund them? Barbara et al will develop supporting materials on care of the tree to be handed out with each tree. There may also be an interactive on line "let us know how your tree is doing" with pictures set up.

8. Nancy reported from the Tree Manual revision group. The large shade tree list (prepared for developers) has been updated. Upcoming topics: the general recommended tree list, and then regulations which will govern implementation of the bylaw revisions just passed.
9. Bylaw working group discussion. We briefly discussed a recent adoption of Dan Miller's recommendation to require changes to tree action occurring after submission of the original plot plan during construction to be submitted in a timely fashion to the tree warden. Gerry and others pointed out that currently, comparing the as-built plot plan with the original should yield a correct count of trees needing mitigation. Mark noted that Dan was "very convincing, in his desire to update while work in progress. The new enforcement officer, belonging to Police, mostly is there to enforce noise ordinances.
10. Discussion of landscape plans for new LHS. The town has an Integrated Design and Construction Policy. Aspects of its sway can be waived in individual circumstances by the Select Board. Town owned

trees are subject to section 7. Our recent bylaw updates do not touch those regulations. We discussed how to have the most input to the project. Members and Dave are already attending the initial meetings. We are particularly concerned about size of parking lot, the wooded knoll next to the current field house (“Keep it!”). Mark stressed that the overall concept might be that we are placing “a large building in a park”. Rachel will inventory trees on the knoll and attempt to quantify their value.

11. Gerry and Nancy reported on the March 28 tree hearing on Pleasant Street sidewalk and roundabout construction. It still is not clear that this was a formal hearing (no one from Forestry was present). However, Ross Morrow from Engineering did agree to keep the trees whose removal was objected to by those attending, and agreed to involve the Tree Committee in tree selection for replanting on land adjacent to the roundabout.

12. The trees at Emery Park were discussed. The Town is considering leaving the spot where the two elms had stood, free of trees. In a unanimous vote

the Committee agreed that those two trees be replanted. Mark Connor will advocate for that WITH the powers that be.

We adjourned at 9:55 AM.

Patricia Moyer, co-chair