

WESTPORT TREE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, May 19, 2021, 4:30pm

Attendees: Dick Stein, Peter Kolbrenner, Ed Picard, Monica Buesser, Marci Caporizzo, Alice Ely, Peter Ratkiewich, Becky Newman, Frank Bruce

I. WELCOME

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 4/21/2021

III. TREE WARDEN REPORT

- a. **Sycamore at Compo South & Post Road** – Bruce Lindsay, while unable to attend, sent word via Monica Buesser that the condition of this iconic sycamore, whose continuing health has prompted discussion on town media, may require attention. However, this is outside of the Tree Warden’s purview, since it is located on a state road and bordered by private property.

IV. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

- a. **Available spot on Tree Board – interested individuals invited to attend meeting**
 - i. Frank Bruce, a Westport citizen who is interested in serving on the Tree Board, attended the meeting and was introduced to other members.
- b. LWA – Storywalk
 - i. The storywalk activity received publicity on the 06880. After the recent cleanup during SLOBS service day, the path is pleasant and very easy to walk.
- c. Tree City status
 - i. A proclamation regarding trees from the First Selectman’s office was obtained, fulfilling a Tree City commitment; coverage of Westport’s Arbor Day plantings, in the 06880 blog, fulfilled another Tree City obligation
 - ii. Danica Doroski, the Urban Forestry Coordinator for CT DEEP, has given us the Tree City sign and flag, and contacted John Broadbin, Peter Ratkiewich and Bruce Lindsay regarding placement. In addition, the Tree City flag can fly at Town Hall on Arbor Day and during Oaktobberfest or

other relevant days. The town may also apply for grants open to official “Tree Cities”.

- d. Movie screening sponsored by Tree Board – Call of the Forest by Diana Beresford-Kroeger
 - i. Earthplace has agreed to screening of this movie at their outdoor amphitheatre. Becky Newman advised that there is a projector and new sound system. A July/August screening is the goal.
 - ii. Marci Caporizzo and Monica are investigating further logistics, including cost and production specifications at the site. Need to get funding for fee – less if movie is free to attend. The tree board budget may afford offering a free screening to the public.
 - 1. BluRay/DVD are available/preferred formats and one month’s notice is required to obtain the film
 - 2. Frank Bruce offered to preview/promote the screening via Channel 12’s media resources
- e. Oaktober
 - i. Oak saplings needed for giveaway – Doug Williams of Bartlett Tree has offered to provide oak saplings.
 - ii. Activities explored in discussion were an educational panel discussion on the environmental value of trees, a second movie screening, a forest bathing event, educational tree ID from acorns, scavenger hunt at LWA with oak tree ID’ing.
 - iii. Possible location of event at WTF

V. P & Z ACTIVITY – Dick Stein

- a. Dick Stein had no P&Z activity to report, was investigating the whereabouts of a request reportedly sent to Bruce Lindsay’s office.

VI. TEEN VOLUNTEER GROUPS – Alice Ely

- a. SLOBS – LWA May 2 – Alice Ely reported on the success of this service day activity, in which 20 SLOBS members & parents cleared and filled more than twenty 20-gallon trash bags with invasive species, plus cleared paths and spread woodchips, under the direction of tree board members Ed Picard, Dick Stein, Monica Buesser and Alice Ely. Thanks to advance work by Dick Stein, and a

cleaning crew from the town which did followup; the first third of the LWA property has been cleared of downed tree debris.

- b. For future service events, each board member will receive a key to the tool shed on the arboretum property to facilitate tool access.

VII. NOTABLE TREES –Dick Stein

- a. Peter Kolbrener inquired of Dick Stein whether the tree nearest the Longshore tennis courts – possibly a notable tree – merits attention.
- b. Dick Stein noted that ‘Notable Tree’ designation requires permission from property owner; may be possible to change it to ‘barring owner objection’ vs. active permission?

VIII. CONTACT WITH OTHER RELEVANT COMMITTEES

What activities are other Tree boards/committees accomplishing – Ed Picard

- a. Alice Ely reported that one community, Pound Ridge, has revised its town code to prohibit clearcutting of private lots and to afford native trees with preferred status vs. invasive trees.
- b. Monica Buesser observed that the best approach to develop widespread interest in tree protection was for the concerned public to raise the topic with their respective town representatives, as broad grass roots interest must precede any tree protection initiative. The Tree Board’s primary role is education of the public.

IX. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH – Marci Caporizzo

- a. **How do we educate residents about importance of trees utilizing our current town web page/other**
 - i. The two planned educational initiatives for 2021 are the movie screening and Oaktoberfest
 - ii. Marci Caporizzo is compiling a file on possible educational activities which can be communicated by links on the town’s Tree Board page, social media, broadcast media or print

X. New Business

- a. The board is awaiting word from the town about resuming in-person meetings.

XI. ADJOURNMENT.