

WESTPORT TREE BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, January 20, 2022, 4:30pm

I. **WELCOME**

- II. **Attendees:** Ed Picard, Monica Buesser, Pete Ratkiewich, Frank Rosen, Peter Kohlbrenner, Ben Sykas, Dick Stein, Alice Ely, Marie Rossi, Becky Newman, Kathy Clair

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 12/15/2021** as written.

IV. **TREE WARDEN REPORT**

Tree City USA Growth Award 2022 – Ben Sykas has reviewed the Tree City checklist for a future grant; he is identifying attainable targets for earning next year’s Growth Award. Monica Buesser to categorize the steps the town is already doing that can be recognized for points; qualification of Westport for a Tree City growth award would mean a monetary award.

Ben is following up on any reports of illegal tree cutting activity. He encourages photos to be included to document the violation. It is a violation to work on trees within town right of way. Company doing work must have licensed arborist supervising as well as correct insurance. Reports of potentially illegal activity should include address, name of tree company and a description of the activity.

V. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

- a. New Tree Board member Dave Lowrie expected to be interviewed by the Selectwoman’s office and quickly approved

- b. Arbor Day – Friday, April 29, 2022

Discussed plans for Arbor Day tree giveaway event (a Tree City prerequisite). Looking to obtain 200 saplings from Eversource or other donor. Ben Sykas to reach out to sources, look into obtaining maples, given their high value for habitat, or other smaller tree options. Venue TBD for the giveaway.

Will also plant a larger tree in town as part of Tree City goals.

Placement of Westport’s Tree City sign still TBD.

- c. Planning & Zoning Commission – Zoning Regulation Revision Subcommittee, Preservation of mature trees by protecting them in setback areas, limiting clear cutting. The proposal is being based on the flood/erosion control that trees

provide. Dick Stein commented that the ordinance needs to reflect the dimension of required replacement trees expressed in the parameters of industry standards. Anyone with questions or comments should contact the P&Z chairs.

- d. Bylaws – a search has revealed no existing Tree Board bylaws. Monica Buesser is in process of codifying current Tree Board procedures and responsibilities.
- e. Monica Buesser intends to meet with Jen Tooker, First Selectwoman, in the near future to apprise her of Tree Board plans.
- f. Staples Intern/Eagle Scout project LWA – There is a scout working toward earning her Eagle Scout project who is exploring permanent signage at the Lillian Wadsworth Arboretum, such as permanent labels ID'ing tree species. Funding for the Scout's efforts possibly available from AI's Angels, Westport Evergreen, other

VI. **NOTABLE TREES –Dick Stein & Frank Bruce** – no new notable trees added but has recently identified an exceptionally large oxydendrum (sourwood) tree

VII. **CONTACT WITH OTHER RELEVANT COMMITTEES/Groups**

Builders/Contractors - reasons to avoid clearcutting – Monica Buesser putting together talking point on this

Mary Hogue – Fairfield Tree Committee – spoke with Monica Buesser regarding Fairfield's interest in the Westport P&Z's proposed ordinance

VIII. **FUTURE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

Various tree board members have registered to attend educational webinars on tree protection, such as those offered by Aspetuck Land Trust, Bedford 2030, Yale and UMass

IX. **New Business**

Going forward, Tree Board meetings will be held the third Thursday of each month at 4:30p.m. Location on zoom until further notice. Next meeting Feb. 17, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT