

## WESTPORT TREE BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 17, 2022, 4:30PM

#### AGENDA

- I. **WELCOME**
- II. **Attendees:** Ed Picard, Monica Buesser, Pete Ratkiewich, Frank Rosen, Ben Sykas, Dick Stein, Alice Ely, Ben Sykas, Becky Newman
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 02/17/2022**
  - a. Approved as written.
- IV. **TREE WARDEN REPORT – Ben Sykas**
  - Still pending – Find a grant for a tree inventory in the town’s right of way areas; noted that thorough tree inventories can be costly as they include what trees exist and their condition/need for mitigation
  - Existing tree inventory had been done at Longshore previously when funds became available however those results may be dated by now
  - Benefit of having tree inventory is ascertaining value of trees in event of loss (hurricane, etc.)
  - Brochures on tree care for homeowners and developers will be ordered from ISA for Arbor Day distribution
  - 75 small trees (located on Sylvan, Turkey Hill and Long Lots roads) will receive structural pruning on town ROW’s; will aim to perform structural pruning every 2-3 years to ensure a good and healthy tree canopy
- V. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**
  - a. Arbor Day – Friday, April 20, 2022 – planting a maple at Grace Salmon park  
Bartlett has agreed to provide 100 Red Maples & 100 Dogwoods free of charge  
Westport Book Shop having Spring event on Jesup Green April 23. They have asked us to join them and give away trees (one per person)/have other tree activity. If additional trees received will adjust quantities available for each event.  
Tree Give away at town hall on Friday April 29 3PM-4PM  
Educational Program – Earthplace April 30 3PM – 4PM, Ben Sykas suggested speaker about general tree care: Doug Zitini, arborist  
Also a new storywalk installation on Wednesday, April 13, at Lillian Wadsworth Arboretum, featuring the book, *Be a Tree*.

- b. Ongoing - Tree City USA Growth Award 2022 – checklist for future grant – in process of updating submission due in fall  
<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/growth-award/>
- c. Oaktober and Arbor Day events to be annual occurrences
- d. Updated basic guidelines for Tree Board – Eileen Flug reviewing
- e. Chair’s meeting with Jen Tooker took place; the chair asserted that the new tree warden has been following all protocols re: tree management. The first Selectwoman was informed of the need for tree inventory; the ongoing yearly Arbor Day observance via tree planting; the need for Tree Board members and alternates; the need for a more robust tree board website to further the mission of educating the public regarding trees; the tree board’s opposition to clearcutting of trees, and finally the need for an inventory of town ROW trees.
- f. Staples Intern/Eagle Scout project LWA – awaiting further news from scout
- g. Live rather than zoom meetings tentatively set to resume after May.

**VI. NOTABLE TREES –Dick Stein & Frank Rosen**

Frank Rosen –We can produce our own videos for Notable trees and have them posted on town site.

Dick Stein observed that only one Notable tree currently exists on downtown Town property; all others are private. The chair suggested highlighting big, specimen trees. Frank Rosen is working on getting needed equipment to document the trees.

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

Dave Lowrie – Zoning Regulation Revision subcommittee (P&Z)

- There is no movement on the proposed tree cutting regulation; the committee has promised an update if there is a change

Dave Lowrie – Downtown Implementation Plan Committee

Alice Ely – reported that the chairs of the Newtown and Monroe conservation commissions have reached out to Westport’s Tree Board and other relevant influencers to make them aware of recently passed regulations in Newtown and Monroe, requiring use of native plants in municipal and commercial projects. Monroe expects to be enacting their regulations soon. These regulations require commercial, industrial, and municipal projects to use predominantly native plants for new landscapes and replacements. The regulations do not require homeowners to use native plants but they will be encouraged to do so.

Ben Sykas commented that while a high percentage of natives is aimed for, at times native options are not commercially available, especially to satisfy unique site conditions such as salt tolerance. Dick Stein asked about the regulations’ stance on cultivars/hybrids of native varieties which may have more disease resistance. Alice Ely will obtain the actual text from the Monroe and Newtown regulations and provide them to the board.

## **VIII. FUTURE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

Town website – need to create informative page with links to general tree information AND about town trees on right of way. The chair is working on this objective and Jen Tooker is aligned.

## **IX. New Business**

- a. Ed Picard suggested that an educational Tree Walk at Sherwood Island be organized for Oaktoberfest.
- b. Dave Lowrie shared some ideas from a recent ALT presentation by the [wildseedproject.net](http://wildseedproject.net), which promotes planting complementary plant species known as ‘guilds’
- c. Dave Lowrie has joined the STEM journal as a guest editor
- d. Dick Stein spoke of the deer problem and its detrimental impact on tree health and habitat