

1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605

ARBOR COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, July 1, 2024, 8:15-10:15 AM

MINUTES

Present: J. Barnes, M. Blackstone, T. Davis, C. Hanson, J. Lambert, T. White

- 1. Call to Order** by Chair, Tabatha White at 8:20AM
- 2. Adoption of Minutes of June 3, 2024:** T. Davis moved, C. Hanson seconded, unanimous.
- 3. Staff Comments or Clarifications**--No staff in attendance.
 - It would be helpful to know when the City Planner will be able to respond to the draft Tree Ordinance and to get some response on the Tree Warden job description.
 - C. Hanson offered to schedule a meeting for her to meet with the City Manager and City Planner to determine what the arrangements are for staff connected with our commission and when we will get feedback on the materials we have produced.
- 4. Citizen Comments**--None, but it was observed that public attendance and input at city meetings would be more substantial if there were an actual calendar of meetings on the City website.
- 5. Report from City Council**
 - C. Hanson reviewed the results of the Arbor Commission's submissions and requests during the annual budget process. The Parks and Recreation Department was not in the budget for the upcoming budget year and the City Manager remains the tree warden. That being said there is an intention to move in that direction. Tree expenditures will have a delegated budget line under the Public Works Department and the Arbor Commission has been given a \$9000 budget. There is talk of a budget review in the fall and possible budget adjustments at that point. Members thanked C. Hanson for her strong representation during the budget process.

- Agreed that T. White will forward the updated Tree Warden job description and ordinance to M. Williams and C. Pearce with a copy to C. Hanson to facilitate her meeting with these people. M. Blackstone suggested that she also use that meeting to ask about the City's interest in flying the Tree City USA flag. It was also suggested that at her meeting she ask about who is in charge of communications during M. Condon's leave?
- C. Hanson also reported that T. Davis' visit and representation to Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was well received.
- In further discussion it was agreed that the Arbor Commission should have a representative as part of the technical team which advises the Planning Board and that the Commission should schedule a meeting with the Planning Board regarding that representation and the large issues relating to urban forestry that need to be better addressed in the UDO.
- C. Hanson noted that she will not be standing for re-election to Council in the fall. Commission members hoped that she would consider staying on as a member of the Commission after leaving Council.

6. Action Item Reports/Decisions

- Tree City USA flag (M. Blackstone)--referred to C. Hanson for her meeting with the City Manager.
- Memorial tree planting (M. Blackstone/T. White)--Of the options outlined by T. White it was agreed that the Knowlton Park planting would be most suitable and stand the best chance of survival for this planting. There was discussion regarding the options for identifying memorial trees. While a granite stone may be desirable to avoid it being damaged or removed, the cost of such a marker relative to the cost of planting a tree may be more than what the market will bear. Having the option of a simple plaque may be important--especially for this first donor/memorial planting.
- Summer public education event: A beech leaf disease panel (possibly on zoom) is planned for August. This would involve Beth Brantley, from Bartlett's lab and J. Lambert. Panelists will address the origins, nature and results of the disease in the area as

well as efforts to possibly address it. The disease first appeared in Ohio in 2012. It is possible to do injections and we are seeing results but mortality in the coastal area is substantial. T. Davis is looking for beech without the disease because scientists and foresters will want to access possibly immune trees to try to save the species. T. White will contact be in touch with panelists to determine the best time/day--possibly using zoom. C. Hanson will book space at the High School (where there are mature beech trees that could provide hands on examples) if needed.

- Review Commission's monthly meeting time. S. Walzyck was not present so this was not addressed.
- Letters of resignation of two Commission members plus appointment of two new members. Amy Reisman and Albert Harmon have had to step away from the Commission. Prior to accepting their resignation we should have two new members in mind: possibly another person from Blue Hill Heritage Trust and/or Frenchman Bay Conservancy. Someone else from the business community should also be sought out. This will be further discussed at the next meeting.

7. Committee Reports

- **Tree Ordinance/Tree Warden Job Description** (I. Drummond, J. Lambert, T. White)
- There have been a few updates on the Tree Ordinance and Tree Warden Job Description. T. White will provide the most recent versions to C. Hanson, C. Pearce and M. Williams prior to meeting with them.
- It was noted that the committee needs to review the ordinance and tree warden job description in light of 2025 budget decisions and resulting staffing.
- **Forest Management Plan** (Blackstone, T. Davis, S. Walczyk, J. Barnes, T. White) (10:00AM)
- Current status--Meetings have not taken place in part because of the amount of other work related to grant applications and in part because S. Walzyck has not been available. M. Blackstone will

email her to try to find a better time for meetings. Issues and approaches to Chapter 56 (T. Davis).

- There was no time for T. Davis to talk to the Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee but she was assured that changes to Chap 56 will be extensive;--so this is something that will need to be an ongoing follow up item during the Comp Plan review process and during the process of re-writing the relevant ordinance(s).
- **Grant application Update (Blackstone)**
- We have received notice of a \$20,000 Project Canopy Grant (fully funded) and we need to develop a work plan related to this proposal. Agreed that we should invite Adam Wilson to the next Arbor Commission meeting to discuss this in the context of funds allocated for work relating to trees in the upcoming budget year.
- We have not received an official response to our IRA Urban & Community Forestry Grant application.
- C. Hanson noted that C. Pearce and J. Richards are planning a second City Beautification meeting so this funding is something that could be reported at that meeting.

8. Work Schedule for Information (Timelines, Deadlines)

- a) Budget Proposals for 2025 (submitted and presented to Council April 2024; follow up communications/meetings with City Manager necessary in light of Fall budget review)
- b) Project Canopy Grant Application (submitted May 15, 2024/received)
- c) Inflation Reduction Act Urban & Community Forestry Grant (submitted May 15, 2024; results pending)
- d) Revised Tree Ordinance (sent for consultation in May; finalize for submission to Council September 2024?)
- e) Tree Warden Job Description (March 6, 2024 to City Manager/Council; resent after arrival of new city manager; resent July 2024)
- f) Submission of Arbor Day Proclamation to Mayor (proclaimed February 12, 2024)

- g) Submission of Tree City USA 2024 application (submitted December 2024)
- h) Community Tree Nursery Input on Ordering & Planting for 2025
- i) Finalize City of Ellsworth Forestry Management Plan (first full review by Commission October 2024)
- j) Plan Public Education Programming for 2024-2025 (Chestnut Program, April 2024; Beech Leaf Disease August 2024; other on White Pine, to remove or not?)
- k) Arbor Day/Maine Arbor Week 2025 Activities (?)
- l) Other

9. Member Comments/Other Business. We need to consult with the tree warden to determine the future of the tree in the small landscaped area on Water Street. Removal and replacement of that tree should be covered by the Ellsworth American. It was suggested that the wood could be donated to the Gilley Museum for carving and that they might reciprocate with a carving that the Arbor Commission could auction off for fundraising.

10. Next Meeting: August 5, 2024 8:15-10:15AM.

11. Adjournment 9:50AM: C. Hanson moved, M. Blackstone seconded, unanimous.