

PUBLIC SHADE TREE COMMITTEE
April 21, 2009
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present: Alan Snow, Tree Warden; Otto Stein, ConCom; Rbt Erwin, Dennis Ryan, Wm Hutchinson, Hope Crolius, Jason Skeels, Town Engineer; Calvin Layton, WMECO.

Minutes

Minutes of March 10, 2009 were approved.

Sand Hill Road

Jason Skeels presented the plans for Sand Hill Rd. including plans with photographs of planned regarding, widening and drainage basins. The major issue for the committee was the fact that this is an approved scenic road. The presentation with the blueprints showed significant tree removal of some significant trees. While part of the intent was to reduce soil runoff into the river, it was felt that the large number of proposed tree removals would in actuality increase soil erosion in the area. The proposal specifically had designed two rather large concrete catchments to collect sand and other runoff before it reached the Mill River. Also proposed was to use the storm drainage system on State St. with a large perforated concrete chamber to allow clean water discharge into the Mill River. Overall some 23 trees have been proposed for removal.

MOTION: Plan is unacceptable because of extreme tree loss and it is not in keeping with the scenic highway concept. Moved: to maintain integrity of scenic road. The motion was passed unanimously.

WMECO Tree Trimming

Calvin Layton reporting for the Western Mass Electric company on the completion of the town wide trimming of trees along the power lines of Amherst and Pelham. This included 17 circuits with about 9000 customers. There were three refusals and 3 requests for light trimming. The trimming process cost about \$3500 per mile. Mr. Layton uses 14 crews with training and crew reviews. In the Amherst- Pelham area he uses the more highly trained and effective crews with the lesser trained private tree companies assigned outside the area.

The next trimming project will not use the direct approach to homeowners but will change over to a notification system.

Arbor Day

Planting of resistant Elm at Jones Library at 1:00 PM; North Amherst Library 11:00 AM. A sample of the Asian Long Horn Beetle (plastic mount) was provided (see also below).

Set up on Common Sat Apr. 25th, 8:00 AM to 10:30. Lilacs and River Birch seedlings will be distributed.

Tree Warden

Dan LaFountane's (bucket operator) position is not funded. The tree assessment and removal are going apace. Goal is to put all different areas, Tree Crews and Tree Warden in a common data pool and have centralized data.

Cemetery Tree Removal

Cemetery tree removal doesn't fall under Chap. 87. The overseers do not want to replace removed trees since space opened becomes a saleable plot.

Girl Scout walk was weather cancelled. All Girl Scouts will be doing tree planting for the 250th

Tree policy for removal is working and some persons who wanted trees removed withdrew applications when informed of cost.

Arbor Day 2009 was a success!

We gave away a lot of river birch whips, and the remainder of last year's lilacs, receiving about \$80 in donations. Gave away lots of literature on the "250 for 250" sale which will hopefully result in some orders. Please pass along the word that the first batch of trees ordered should be arriving in the next couple of weeks, and we will notify people so they can pick up their trees. The Gazette was there and got quite a few photos, including of Pete and his kids. Pete is the new foreman of the tree crew -- for those of you who haven't met him; he has a lot of ideas and even more energy. He made a nice connection with the Brownie leader whose troop is planting a black gum tree at the Fort River Elementary School playground this week - his crew will be digging the hole for them. He also gave some bucket lift rides.

The Earth Day folks were at a tent set up adjacent to us, and they attracted much interest -- particularly Dr. Worm, a lovely man who has devoted his life to spreading the word about kitchen composting with worms.

The Extravaganza festival was taking place, at increasingly loud decibel levels, on the southern end of the Common. The crowds streaming by to attend this event were friendly and did stop by to look at the Asian Longhorn Beetle preserved in its case. These mostly young people are, indeed, interested in flora, in their own way -- but in no position to purchase trees. Susan Waite of the Earth Day group and I began to toss around the idea of holding a combination Earth Day/Arbor Day/Sustainable Energy Day all on one day, perhaps the following weekend next year -- so as to not coincide with the marijuana celebration. We'd like to attract a bigger and more family-friendly crowd in the future -- so let's discuss it at our next meeting on May 12.

Given that we didn't advertise heavily this year, we still had a nice turnout. Alan was in Worcester helping plant 100 much-needed trees, and Bill Hutchinson filled in wonderfully as the "information man" when people had tree questions. All in all, it was a great day. Thanks to all who helped make it happen.

Next meeting will be May 12th at 4:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.