

Minutes
City of Geneva Shade Tree Committee
Thursday August 21st, 2025 Noon
Finger Lakes Welcome Center Conference Room

Present: Joe Venuti, James Norwalk, Jeremy Busch, Tom Burrall, James McCorkle, Charlie Rouse

Excused: James Anderson, Daisy Hoyt, John Brennan, James Engel, Jay Freer

Guests: Steve Horton, Sydney Schumacher, Joe Arroyo

Approval: Minutes for the April 17th, 2025 meeting minutes approved

Old Business:

- Membership updates:

The committee membership and term ending date as follows:

Charles Rouse December 31, 2025
Jeremy Busch December 31, 2025
James Norwalk (Chair) December 31, 2025
Tom Burrall December 31, 2025
James McCorkle December 31, 2026
Daisy Hoyt December 31, 2026
Jay Freer December 31, 2027
James Anderson December 31, 2027
James Engel December 31, 2027

Staff Liaison – Joe Venuti, Director of Public Works

Council Liaison – John Brennan

Members whose terms expire on December 31, 2025, Charlies Rouse, Jeremy Busch, Tom Burrall, and James Norwalk will all seek to serve another term. John Brennan will submit the reappointment recommendation to the City Council.

- Problem trees and other updates:

63 Highland Ave: Honeylocust #5415. Homeowners complain about pavement heaving.

839 South Main St: Norway Maple #7528. Dead and needs to be removed by DPW.

44 N. Wadsworth St: 1 dead tree in a group of 4 not in database. These were probably planted by the homeowner after the DEC soil remediation project.

Joe Venuti wants to remove the trees along the bridge abutments on N. Exchange St. due to poor condition. No objections were raised.

- Update on scheduled pruning:

All scheduled pruning scheduled in 2024 has been completed.

- Review of the 2025 Budget and the impact on tree care:

There is approximately \$15,000 remaining in the tree care budget for 2025. Jim Norwalk and Steve Horton have inspected the trees flagged for removal via complaints and database records. DPW has begun removal of trees without utility conflicts and Jim Norwalk will submit the priority tree to be contracted because of utility wire conflicts to Joe Venuti ASAP.

The upcoming budget will likely reduce the tree care in 2026 to \$56,000.

- Discuss requirement for a 3-year Shade Tree Report

Jeremy Busch asked that the committee familiarize itself with the 2012 report. We should model the upcoming report on this document and cover the period defined by Joe Venuti's arrival in 2020 until the end of 2025. We would like to assign the sections among committee members for authorship.

- Consultation with the City Manager on the 2026 budget:

Joe Venuti asked Jim Norwalk to query the database to create a list of 20 most urgent removals. He reports that the city is seeking about \$90,000 in grant money to complete a new tree inventory.

- DEC Community Reforestation Grant 2026:

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/urban-and-community-forestry/urban-and-community-forestry-grants>

This discussion will be taken up at a later meeting.

New Business:

- Introduction of Business Improvement District staff Sydney Schumacher and Joe Arroyo. Sydney will be coordinating maintenance operations and Joe has experience with tree care and will maintain downtown trees. Sydney requested trees for the following locations within the BID area in tree pits:

22 Seneca St: Eastern Redbud and Serviceberry 'Autumn Brilliance'

11 Seneca St (side): Black Gum

529 Exchange St: Common Hackberry

470 Exchange St: Black Gum (replacement)

At Lakefront Park:

Replace dead columnar tree closest to the statue and small boat dock area:
Common Hackberry

Sydney would also like to add a tree to one of the swale gardens near the shade structures at the foot of Castle St. Jim Engel will consult on the selection.

Charlie Rouse notified the committee about a dead tree near the Lake St entrance but could not give specific location details.

Jeremy Busch let Sydney know about the problem with topped trees along Exchange St.

- Planning Fall 2025 tree planting

For immediate planting

LARGE (7)

Tulip Poplar	4 trees over 12'
American Basswood	1 tree over 12'
Swamp White Oak	1 tree 10'
American Elm 'Jefferson'	1 tree 10' (saved for 154 Maxwell St)

For Fall 2025

SMALL (32+10)

Alleghany Serviceberry	20 trees 6-7'
White Fringetree	2 trees 6-7'
Eastern Redbud	10 trees 6-7'
Green Hawthorn	10 trees (special use)

MEDIUM (11)

American Hornbeam	3 trees 7-8' (need ID help)
American Hop-hornbeam	8 trees 10' (need ID help)

LARGE (62)

Black Gum	8 trees 7-8' (1 or 2 for BID)
Sugar Maple	13 trees 10-12'
Chinkapin Oak	18 trees 10-12'
Hackberry	12 trees 7-8' (1 for BID)
Bitternut Hickory	4 trees 8-10'
Kentucky Coffeetree	3 trees 8-10'
Black Maple	3 trees 6-8' (need ID help)

Jim Norwalk will begin to allocate these based on requests received from the DPW office and from unmet requests from previous season (especially the small trees we now have in stock).

James Anderson and Blueprint Geneva volunteers are using mail-in post cards delivered to homes with LARGE ROW spaces according to their alphabetical order in the database.

Tom Burrall with canvas the area of South Main St overlooking the lake to take large trees.

John Brennan would like the Black Gum planted at 409 S. Main St replaced since it has died.

Next Meeting: NOON September 18th, 2025 at the Finger Lakes Welcome Center Conference Room