

Minutes
City of Geneva Shade Tree Committee
Thursday June 16th, 2022 Noon
Finger Lakes Welcome Center Conference Room

Present: James Norwalk, Jeremy Busch, Jay Freer, James McCorkle, Charlie Rouse

Absent: Joe Venuti, Ken Camera, Dahlia Wist, Jim Engel, Christen Davis

Approval: Minutes for the May 26th meeting with several small edits.

Old Business:

- Lafayette tree planting

The Committee expressed frustration at the inability of the DPW to execute the final steps of this installation.

New Business:

- Missing Seneca St. tree, dead DRI trees on Exchange St. (hawthorns)

No updates about these trees. The DRI hawthorns on Exchange St. are supposedly guaranteed for two years by Watson Nursery.

- Cemetery Tree Removal update

From Joe Venuti: " Large oak tree trunk split this week at Washington St cemetery. We are receiving quotes on taking this tree down along with several adjacent dead ash trees and a leaning dead pine tree. 5 trees in total in this one area are being looked at for cost effectiveness and restoration needs. This work will eat into our annual budget dollars."

The committee agreed that a large expense project to remove trees from Washington St. Cemetery was not a priority beyond the removal of the downed branches. We would like money and effort to be reserved for our extensive backlog of removals for dead and hazardous trees in the city rights-of-way. Jim Norwalk will write Joe Venuti and email to express this advise.

- Fiber Optic utility project and tree removals

From Joe Venuti: "Fiber optic utility project is progressing. We are waiting a on list of pruned trees from the contractors."

Jim Norwalk requests records be forwarded to him to keep the database accurate.

- Assessments of WWTP nursery stock for Fall 2022 planting

This will be coordinated by Jim Engel.

From Joe Venuti: "Shade Tree may wish to identify future nursery areas. It must be made a point to discuss logistics of the nursery. Our WWTP is regulated by the NYSDEC and also the USEPA and our sewer work will continue to come first. The WWTP location is getting pretty big and staff

there has other duties and responsibilities that take priority. We enjoy the nursery there and currently have hundreds of trees that require maintenance that our staff gets to only as time allows. This may cause concern but I want to be clear of the DPW obligations.

The committee asks:

1) What other suitable locations are there in the city? The space would need access to water and protection from deer, etc.

2) What tasks does the WWTP staff need our volunteers to take over. We have only ever asked for space, minimal material support such as root bags, soil, etc., and to have the sprinklers turned on occasionally. We never meant to burden staff with extra chores or responsibilities. The extra work done by the WWTP staff this past Spring was offered by Nick DeMaria because the city hadn't received the root bags in time for our scheduled volunteer work day. We never petitioned for the WWTP to do so but after the offer was made we did our due diligence to remind staff that the work needed to be completed before the trees suffered too much in their nursery pots. We wish to reiterate that we are ready and willing to coordinate with the WWTP in any way possible and to alleviate further burdens placed on them as hosts to the nursery.

- Planning critical removals, focus on Norway Maples and ash spp. (98 Hillcrest Ave.)

James McCorkle submitted a letter addressed to some members of the committee and to Joe Venuti which pleaded for quick resolution to a dangerous. Broken limb on a tree at 98 Hillcrest Ave. They are worried the fractured limb is going to come down and heavily damage the front of the house. They are frustrated by slow reaction by the DPW and claim they have offered to pay for a private outfit to come remove the tree but were denied the request for permission to do so by the city.

The committee agreed that the DPW should go ahead with any required/requested removals of Norway Maples, or ash species without prior notice to or advisement from the Shade Tree Committee. Norway Maples are an undesirable species which make up approximately 30% of the urban forest in Geneva. Many are in decline which pose risk to person and property. Ash trees are nearly certainly infested with Emerald Ash Borer. Many are completely or nearly dead and need to come down ASAP. All records of removals need to be submitted to Jim Norwalk to be logged into the tree database.

From Joe Venuti: "We hired Mark Perry to work part time for the engineering department. He will start compiling a list of 2022 removals. Norway maples and ash tree removals are great place, plus the ward by ward removal list from last year, plus my ever growing complaint lists. "

Jim Norwalk would like to work with Mark Perry and help him use the tree database to manage the removal strategy. Jim Norwalk would like to see the complaints list and add those comments and requests to the tree database.

- Grant applications

From Joe Venuti: I think we should pursue tree grants, but they need to be substantial enough to be worth the effort of the application and management of the funds. For a grant for \$1,000, city costs to fill out the application and complete all of the paper work to administer and seek reimbursement, will cost more than it is worth.

- Letter about North Main median trees

N, Main St. resident Joe Midori sent a letter to complain that the city is doing a poor job of caring for the medians. He specifically thinks that the few trees which have died and been removed should be replaced immediately. Jim Norwalk will write a response to him explaining that the median project was completed over 15 years ago and that we currently do not have the resources to manage ongoing issues with a few eventual tree failures.

Next Meeting:

Thursday June 16th, NOON, Geneva Lakefront Visitor's Center