

Minutes
City of Geneva Shade Tree Committee
Thursday July 21st, 2022 Noon
Finger Lakes Welcome Center Conference Room

Present: James Norwalk, Jeremy Busch, James McCorkle, Charlie Rouse, Jim Engel, Ken Camera, Mark Perry

Absent: Joe Venuti, Dahlia Wist, Christen Davis, Jay Freer

Approval: Minutes for the June 17th meeting

Former Director of the DPW, Mark Perry introduced himself. He has been hired part time to help the city manage the removal of high-priority trees and will act as a DPW representative on the Shade Tree Committee.

Old Business:

- Lafayette tree selection (1.25"-1.5" caliper trees) update

Small/Medium:

2-American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) 1.25-1.5" \$120ea.
5-Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn (*Crataegus crusgalli inermis*) 1.25-1.5" \$115ea.
1-Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus x yedoensis*) 1.25-1.5" \$115ea.
4-Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) 1.75" \$175ea.

Medium/Large

2 (+1?)-Chinkapin Oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) 1.5" \$175ea.
4 (+1?)-Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) 1.25-1.5" \$115ea.
3-Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) 1.5-1.75" \$115ea.

21 (+1) trees total quoted \$2895 by We Find Plants. The (+1) indicates either a Chinkapin Oak or a Hackberry will be added to the planting depending on availability. Mark Perry believes this quote includes the cost of delivery. No taxes charges will be added since it is a government transaction. Mark said installation will be done "in-house" by DPW staff.

- 98 Hillcrest Ave. dangerous limb removal and discussion.

The dangerous limb has been removed by an arrangement made by Mark Perry with an arborist he knows named (Craig Center?) who normally handles tree and utility work for NYSEG. This was not a NYSEG issue since the utilities in conflict with the problem tree were secondary wires between the main lines and the home; the service was done as a special courtesy call due to the dangerous situation. Mark stated that it is difficult to schedule short-notice tree work these days due to the heavy work volume local arborists have due to the EAB die-offs, etc.

New Business:

- Working with Mark Perry to plan, coordinate, and execute tree removals and safety pruning. Planning critical removals, focus on Norway Maples and ash spp. and addressing complaint locations (453 S. Main St.)

Committee members want to know what to tell residents who approach them with tree complaints. Mark asked that they be instructed to send an email to complaint@geneva.ny.us or call the Engineering Dept. at 1-315-789-3101. Emailed complaints should cc a resident's ward representative. Jim Norwalk forwarded a homeowner complaint to Mark about a compromised maple at 453 S. Main St.

- Missing Seneca St. tree, dead DRI trees on Exchange St. (hawthorns) and new installation watering.

These trees will be replaced. We don't know what the specific procedure will be for repairing the rubberized porous paved surface installed over the root ball. Contractors have been watering from a tanker truck and monitoring and filling the plastic watering bags installed around the trunks of newly installed trees.

- Cemetery Tree Removal update: what work was completed, by whom, and what were the costs?

Mark reported that work was completed by contract and by DPW. No other information was presented other than trees were in poor and dangerous condition.

- Fiber Optic utility project and tree removals

Mark will update when he gets information. He does not know of any specific removals because of utility work. Ken Camera reported that work he observed in Ward 4 was all pruning of high limbs to accommodate higher poles and wire pathways.

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. He made a short survey recently and believes there are American Hornbeam, American Basswoods, Sugar Maples, Bur/Swamp White Oaks, American Sycamore, and Tulip Poplar from the Spring 2020 cohort that will be ready for planting in the upcoming Fall.

- Letter about North Main median trees

Jim Norwalk is still planning on addressing Joe Midiri's complaint. Ken Camera asked to be cc'd in communication.

- Future nursery location

Mark will speak to WWTP staff about concerns.

- Creating a city Arborist staff position.

Jim Norwalk introduced the idea that Geneva should hire a certified staff Arborist to manage the urban forest. There is enough need to coordinate tree removals and planting and manage long-term strategy involving pruning and assessment. Such a position could be combined with shared services with nearby communities or involve a multitasked responsibility with landscaping

care of the lakefront and DRI greenspace installations. He is worried that ongoing deferred investment in tree care is causing harm and fails to acknowledge the urban forest as important infrastructure that provides many benefits. Also, a concern is that slow response by the city to satisfy complaints about dead, dying, dangerous trees which threaten property and safety is a poor public relations situation. This may result in unwillingness of homeowners to want replacement trees or to cooperate with tree care if they feel that a tree might pose an ultimate risk that the city won't address satisfactorily. The city should be able to respond to tree issues as quickly as it does to sewer problems, etc. Mark shared his perspective from his tenure as the head of the DPW. He says he is working on speeding up response times and needs to build a deeper pool of tree contractors to summon on the types of short-notice situations that occur. He thinks the additional money in the budget this year is a step in the right direction. When asked why the DPW doesn't train their own crew to do more dedicated tree work that would keep from having to contract so much tree work, he said some of the issues have to do with how union negotiations and compensation issues affect the variety of tasks city workers can be asked to complete. Councilor Camera said we should put together a brief factual report covering strategies other communities have for tree care. Jim Norwalk and Mark Perry volunteered to explore this and prepare a guiding document for consideration during upcoming budget negotiations.

Next Meeting:

Thursday August 18th, NOON, Geneva Lakefront Visitor's Center