

Minutes
City of Geneva Shade Tree Committee
Thursday December 19th, 2024 Noon
Finger Lakes Welcome Center Conference Room

Present: Joe Venuti, John Brennan, James Norwalk, Jay Freer, Charlie Rouse, James Anderson, Jeremy Busch, James McCorkle, Jim Engel, Tom Burrall

Absent: Daisy Hoyt

Approval: Minutes for the September 19th, 2024 meeting approved with one spelling error correction .

Old Business:

- Membership updates:

The committee membership and term ending date is 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

- Jim Norwalk has completed a draft article to the Finger Lakes Times describing the creation of the city tree nursery and the success of our recent tree planting efforts. Joe Venuti reported that this year is the first year in many that the city has planted more trees than it removed and would like that information added to the piece. The committee asked that the article contain the original formation dates for the committee. City Clerk Nicole Tillotson may have that specific information. According to the online municipal code, the earliest reference to the tree committee is Ch. 44 Arts III of the 1968 Code (now Ch 273).

- New NYSEG trees and other problem trees:

Jim Norwalk provided the following information to the committee

115 N. Main. "Snow Goose" cherry is dead. REMOVE

13 Columbia St. Request for pruning. Unclear if this has been complete according to database records.

114 N Main St. tree #3066 Sugar Maple. Jay Freer requests this be added to the REMOVAL list.

Joe Venuti reports there will not be any planting of trees, etc. at the lakefront tunnel repair because of budget constraints.

The Duncan Donuts project at N. Exchange and North Streets will not be ready for tree installation until Summer or Fall 2025.

- Jackie Augustine (Blueprint Geneva) reported to James Anderson and James Norwalk that the grant application to River Networks \$3.3 million Rooting Resilience project has been unsuccessful. She will apply for other grant funding.
- The following trees are available for Fall 2024

Small/Medium 15 total

3 Eastern Redbud
9 American Hop-hornbeam
3 White Fringetree

Medium/Large 41 total

11 Chinkapin Oak
8 Tulip Poplar
4 Northern Red Oak
2 Swamp White Oak
7 Sugar Maple
3 Black Gum
3 American Elm
3 American Basswood

New Business:

- Tree nursery update, future needs for new saplings, trees that need immediate planting.

The potted Eastern Redbud and White Fringetrees at White Oak Nursery can be transplanted into the nursery when weather permits and volunteers are available. Jim Engel will coordinate this. Jay Freer has stored the grafted crabapples until next Spring. The date for HWS Colleges Day of Service is April 12th from 11:30 AM until 2:30 PM. Jim Norwalk will reserve a group for help at the nursery with a plan to be created in a later meeting. Jay Freer contacted, Bill Albert, the resident at 154 Maxwell Ave. He has agreed to have one or two of the available American Elms. There were 2 large trees removed from there recently, so we need to make sure the soil is ready for a new tree before planting.

Charlie Rouse left 3 small American Elm saplings in plastic buckets at the east edge of the nursery. These will need to be transplanted into root control bags in Spring.

David Poteet of the Canandaigua tree committee donated 3 small "white" oak seedlings which he grew from the historic Bicentennial Oak which grows at the Canandaigua Veterans Affairs complex. He says the oak is now failing and he wants to get as many seedlings grown from it as possible. They appear to be Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*). Jim Norwalk will transplant them at the nursery in the Spring.

There are approximately 250 14" root control bags stored on the bench in the WWTP greenhouse.

The coordinated effort with HWS Colleges to plant approximately 16 trees in the public rights-of-way around campus is still in process. DPW is working with campus staff to negotiate planting responsibilities so that they can hopefully be planted this season.

Jim Engel will work up a list of suggestions for 2025 nursery additions and trees/shrubs for Arbor Day giveaway. He will work from his own inventory at White Oak Nursery as well as sources from American Natives Nursery in Maryland. We will no longer source trees from Schott Nursery due to delivery limitations and tree quality concerns.

Jim Engel does not think we need to take special precautions with tree selection due to the recent discovery of Spotted Lanternfly in Geneva.

- Summary of 2024 plantings and removals:

Joe Venuti reports that so far 37 trees have been planted. He will provide details to Jim Norwalk soon to enter into the database. There are several allotted trees that have not been planted due to spacing conflicts with nearby trees. Jim Norwalk states that confirming locations for nursery trees is now our most challenging step in the process.

Joe Venuti reports that contracted 2024 removals are nearly complete. The contractor is doing a more involved removal of stump grinding and soil enrichment on the same day the tree is cut. It is a slower process but is more efficient than the previous methods which delayed stump grinding up to several seasons. Joe Venuti will provide final records to Jim Norwalk for the database ASAP.

- DEC Community Reforestation Grant due Wednesday March 12th, 2025: <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/urban-and-community-forestry/urban-and-community-forestry-grants>
- John Brennan reported that local resident Maeve Reilly was concerned about the dramatic impact of several tree cutting along urban sections of Castle Creek. Joe Venuti explained that this work was because of storm debris problems, fallen trees, culvert clogs, and compromised concrete due to root damage. Removal and maintenance is required by FEMA in order to qualify for federal storm damage emergency funds. The DPW will continue to maintain these areas.
- Jim Norwalk would like more training for city staff on using the database to communicate tree work. Often the details he receives from staff lack sufficient useful information for him to enter data. As a result, he spends too much time driving from address to address to see what type of work actually took place. Joe Venuti will set up a time for Jim Norwalk to meet with staff.

Next Meeting: Thursday January 16th, 2025 NOON at the Geneva Visitor's Center Conference Room.