

FINAL MINUTES

Great Barrington Tree Committee Meeting Wednesday, November 8 2023, 5pm Mason Library & Zoom

Chairperson: Julie Anidjar

Vice-Chairperson: Michael Peretti, not in attendance

Secretary: Gary Frenkel

Also present:

- Bobby Houston, committee member
- Brooke Davida, committee member (via Zoom)
- Mary Stephen, committee member

Approval of previous meeting's notes (Oct 11), unanimous approval from all committee attendees

I. Tree Warden Report

- Warden didn't attend meeting

II. Update on fall plantings for 2023

- Tree Warden not in attendance to confirm, but we've seen a lot of progress from our recent planting request, see tracking doc:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SA6aWpx2CYTplaLLnphmbc7faC92yOvNhHXPowtooQ/edit#gid=0>
- Also seeing trees being pruned on Main St

III. Town Master Plan input from Tree Committee

- Current language below
- Trees are mentioned throughout the existing plan
- Suggest a tree master planting plan within the town master plan, e.g.
 - Increasing canopy cover
 - Reliable tree diversity
 - Increase native plantings
 - Improve health of community that fosters social interaction
 - Planting approach (right tree / right place)
 - Spacing and planting guidelines
- Recognize our heritage trees
- Encourage citizens and businesses to plant trees through best practices, planting guides, maintenance recommendations, etc.
- Foster tree education (e.g. markers, arbor day)
- Can the planning board incorporate tree planting minimums into town bylaws e.g. parking lots, new housing developments
- Next steps: Julie to propose language for master plan and send to Pedro

IV. Updating Official Tree List – Gary Frenkel

- Gary to present to Selectboard on Mon Nov 20

V. Tree City USA 2023 application

- Tree Warden needs to provide data for application

VI. Chris Wiltshire – funding ideas

- Can we encourage businesses to plant more trees, e.g. best practices, nursery referrals, etc
- Concern that we can't use TC funds to pay for private businesses to plant trees, but can they get a tax credit (unlikely)
- Can we promote TC achievements to help build citizen support for tree plantings? Peer pressure among local businesses.
- Next steps: Brooke to create a press release about recent TC plantings

VII. New Business

- Next meeting: talk to DPW about tree maintenance practices

VIII. Citizen Speak

- Vivian Orlowski: board of health and agricultural commission are co-hosting a presentation on pesticides and children's health on Tue Nov 14 7-8:30pm via Zoom, presented by Dr Sarah Evans, assistant prof at icahn school of medicine
 - See more here: <https://www.townofgb.org/health-department/events/106736>

IX. Adjournment, 5:55pm

Next meeting: Wed Dec 13, 5pm, Mason Library & Zoom

Submitted by:

Gary Frenkel

Secretary, Great Barrington Tree Committee

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Current master plan language:

https://www.townofgb.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif636/f/uploads/master_plan_volume_1.pdf

Goal OSR 7: Protect, maintain, and care for street trees. Great Barrington's landscape is dotted with an impressive variety and number of trees. Some prominent ones like the Town Hall elm and the Constitution Oak at Simon's Rock have been standing for centuries. The value trees impart to our town is incalculable. They provide pleasant surroundings for our business districts. They frame views of historic buildings. They provide shade. They provide privacy. They soak up carbon dioxide and clean the air. And they increase property values—neighborhoods with street trees are more desirable and valuable than those without. Trees are, in other words, a critical but unsung component of our town infrastructure. And like our other infrastructure, they are aging. They need more attention in order to serve us well into the future. • Strategy OSR 7.1: Care for our town's trees effectively. Mature trees define our neighborhood streets, add distinctive character and value, and reduce our carbon footprint. Utilize the expertise of the Tree Committee and the resources and research available to Great Barrington as a newly- Community Master Plan 2013 Town of Great Barrington, MA 28 designated Tree City. Be proactive in protecting and maintaining our trees; for example, develop a tree plan and inoculate elms against Dutch Elm Disease.