

City of Concord
Conservation Commission
Tree Subcommittee

Minutes of February 23, 2024 Meeting
Council Chambers, City Hall Annex, 43 Green Street

In Attendance:

Subcommittee Members: Ted Diers (Chair), John Regan, Zib Corell, Craig Tufts, Peter Breu, Tom Daigle

Absent: Liz McKinley, Rick Chormann, Stacey Brown

Staff: AnneMarie Skinner (Acting City Planner), Stefanie Breton (Public Information Officer)

Guest: Rob Farquhar (Brochu Nurseries)

1. Call to Order.

Chair Diers called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

2. Minutes of January 26, 2024

John Regan moved, and Tom Daigle seconded, to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2024 meeting. Approval was unanimous.

3. Tree Planting and Paving Program

Zib Corell, John Regan, and Ted Diers volunteered to contact the applicable private property owners for interest in planting trees on their site.

4. Ongoing / Follow Up Items

a. Tree Champion –

Ted reported he is looking to put the award on the ash cutout. He may do a prototype on paper. Peter offered help. Stefanie can help with design and mockup.

It was asked how we could get some information together on the awardee, including how long he/she has been involved. Beth may have more information. Stefanie offered help.

It was discussed whether it would be on Concord TV or we could produce a Concord TV video or pictures to share the award once announced. Ted will present the award and bio.

b. Tree Tours – See above Review Current Tree Preservation and Planting Requirements –

AnneMarie will go through the list and pick 15 most significant trees, and put information on the website with map. Trees must be in the right-of-way or on City-owned land. Trees could be recognized with a placard and QR code in the future. The current tree tour document would need to be rebranded and checked for private property locations. The committee should go through previous brochures and see which trees are on City land or ROW. Anything outside City property needs to be separate and not a City sponsored tour. Look at an abbreviated brochure. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

5. School Canopy Elizabeth McKinley reported via email the following: “I already have an application from Abbot-Downing, and Concord HS is looking to possibly put a team together (last year’s team was made up of mostly seniors who have since graduated). Both schools received trees last year, so it will depend on how many applications we receive if they are chosen. Applications are due by March 25th, so I will have a better idea of which schools will be selected by our next meeting.”

6. Tree Preservation and Requirements

AnneMarie said she can provide information to the committee about projects going on. Staff will keep advocating for preservation of trees at the Planning Board level.

Zeb asked about the planning board process and how staff works with the Planning Board. AnneMarie gave an overview of the process where staff produces detailed reports for the planning board first for determination of completeness, then at a later meeting for public hearing and a vote for approval. She noted how different types of project meet different planning review criteria. A redevelopment such as was recently proposed for the mall would have multiple review steps. The Planning board often takes staff recommendations but does not need to.

Craig noted that at Transportation Policy Advisory Committee subcommittee meetings, it is common for staff to bring forward plans that are going before the Planning Board. TPAC cannot comment directly to the Planning Board because they are advisory to City Council, but conversations with staff can be helpful and supportive.

7. Property Owner Outreach

A list of properties to reach out to was provide to the committee. Zib has already knocked on a few doors and spoke with one person. The group discussed which homes various volunteers would knock doors on, including Lawrence St and Airport Road. A few of the locations on Airport Road were businesses and efforts may be made to reach out to them. It was noted that these addresses should have already received a letter.

8. New Business

- a. Field Trip: John will coordinate with Liz for a possible date for a field trip or tour of the State Nursery. Everyone agreed it would be a nice field trip.
- b. Grants and additional resources: John reported on some of the funding sources he has been following. The School Canopy Program, Unitil tree donations, and bare-root giveaways were briefly discussed. A larger possible Federal grant from the BIL may have an upcoming round. It targets Disadvantaged Communities, which in Concord is the Heights. A possible IRA Federal Grant may not have another round. Manchester and Lebanon recently received substantial funds through that program.

The group discussed the possibility of a local grassroots program through a local business, such as Delta Dental. Perhaps trees could be planted locally near their business, in combination with another effort. Zib noted it would be best to have a plan to present rather than to approach with an open ended idea. This could be a future agenda item.

9. Next Meeting: Friday, March 22, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.

10. Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m. with a motion by John Regan, seconded by Chair Diers. All voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Craig Tufts

To do list:

Chair Diers – trophy, attendance for award presentation

Stefanie Breton – ask Beth Fenstermacher for background on awardee

Chair Diers, John Regan, Zib Corell – door knocking on Lawrence St/Airport Rd, review handouts

AnneMarie Skinner – look at upcoming Planning Board applications

From last meeting – aim for a May walk of Storrs St