

WILTON TREE COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 13, 2010
Comstock Community Center, Room 21 A & B

Present: Jessica Kaplan, Chairman; Junius Brown, Paula Byrdy, Bill Meehan, and Nick Lee

Absent: Kate Throckmorton and Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs

Also Present: Paul Young, Tree Warden, and Barbara Quincy, Wilton resident

I. Call to Order

Chairman Kaplan called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Bill Meehan made a MOTION to approve the minutes of September 15, 2010, as drafted, which was seconded by Nick Lee and carried 5-0-0.

III. Tree Warden's Report

Paul Young distributed his report for September 2010. Despite DPW's other responsibilities, Mr. Young noted how helpful the department has been in removing targeted trees. The trees in front of Village Market have not yet been cut down; Mr. Lee indicated that he was meeting with Tom Therkettle tomorrow and will ask him for a date that this would happen.

IV. Ongoing Business

a. Tree Plan Implementation

Chairman Kaplan reported, per a written update from Ms. Sesto, that the replacement oaks, new shade trees (one at the library and another on Hubbard), and the replacement Kousa dogwood (also at the library) had been

planted. Ms. Sesto also apprised Nancy, the Village Market manager, of our plans and she is supportive. Mr. Lee added that all six Adirondack crabapples for the front of Village Market have been “sold” and will be planted as soon as the existing Norway maples are cut down. It is unclear where Paul Young’s katsura will be planted (the tree, which was in poor health, was removed as part of the Veterans’ Memorial redesign). This decision will be made next spring.

Chairman Kaplan, Ms. Throckmorton and Ms. Sesto walked around Wilton Center on Friday, September 24, adding and deleting possible locations for new trees on the Wilton Center Tree Plan. Chairman Kaplan stated that Mike Conklin in Pat’s office will update the map to reflect these revisions. Using this revised map, Chairman Kaplan intends to notify property owners and obtain their permission to plant before any of these new spots is promised to a tree donor. Ms. Sesto’s report noted as well that she has written an article, “Don’t Move Firewood,” for the fall Conservation Commission newsletter.

The Tree City USA signs, which were earlier mislaid, have been found. According to Ms. Sesto, First Selectman Brennan rejected placing a sign on the new faux stone wall at the corner of Route 7 and Ridgefield Road (Route 33). He indicated that one sign can go on Routes 7 & 33 south of Orem’s and asked that the committee determine a location in north Wilton. Two locations were identified: around Cannondale and north of Olmstead Hill and Route 7.

The committee’s discussion then turned to the new benches in Wilton Center. Six benches have been donated and a dedication ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, at 2:30 p.m. at the library corner of Godfrey and Old Ridgefield Road. Chairman Kaplan encouraged members to attend and asked, on Ms. Sesto’s behalf, for a volunteer to help write a press release on the event. Bill Meehan will call Ms. Sesto and offer assistance. Mr. Brennan is interested in expanding our vision of bench locations to other town properties. Committee members mentioned Merwin Meadows, Horseshoe Pond, the trails near Allen’s Meadows, and bus stops along Route 7 as possible sites.

Chairman Kaplan noted that bicycle racks and bicycles for free rental have appeared around the Center, part of the Wilton Y’s healthy communities’ grant.

b. Tree Emergency Preparedness Plan

Mr. Lee said that he spoke with Mr. Thurkettle about preparing such a plan and Mr. Thurkettle is very interested in it. Mr. Lee added that the quarantine around Worcester, Massachusetts, to prevent the spread of the Asian Long-

Horn beetle, had expanded to 94 square miles. The Emerald Ash Borer is now estimated to be 30 miles from Connecticut, just on the west side of the Hudson River.

c. Norwalk Wilton Tree Festival

Planning for the 2011 festival has started with a focus on fund raising. Elizabeth Craig, a Garden Club member, and Ms. Byrdy are coordinating Wilton's efforts to identify funding sources. Common Fund and the Fairfield County Community Foundation were mentioned; Norwalk will probably take the lead in writing a proposal for FCCF. Junius Brown indicated that the Kiwanis might contribute to the festival and asked that Ms. Byrdy write him with a specific request of how the money will be used, such as purchasing two new tents.

d. Committee Membership

Chairman Kaplan welcomed Barbara Quincy to the meeting, who was invited to gauge her interest in joining the committee. Mr. Brown inquired about the membership nominations list which Ms. Sesto agreed to put together, assigning members to classes so that they have staggered terms, and submit to the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Kaplan will follow up.

V. Other Items

a. Tree Art Show

Chairman Kaplan reminded members that the Wilton Tree Art Show, co-sponsored by the Wilton Garden Club, the tree committee and the library, was going to be held in November. Tree-related art, from wooden bowls to photographs to drawings and paintings, will be displayed in the entire library. Over 80 artists are submitting work, according to Ms. Byrdy, who passed out a postcard highlighting the event and asked all members to attend the artists' reception on Friday, November 5, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

VI. Adjourn

The committee's next meeting is Wednesday, November 10, 2010; no meeting is scheduled in December. If space is not available at Town Hall for next month's meeting, members expressed an interest in meeting at either the library or at Gilbert and Bennett School. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.