

Wilton Tree Committee

Draft Minutes

September 14, 2011

Town Hall Annex, Meeting Room A

Present: Jessica Kaplan, Chairman; Junius Brown; Paula Byrdy; Bill Meehan; Nick Lee; Barbara Quincy; Kate Throckmorton

Absent: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs; Paul Young, Tree Warden

1. Call to order

Chairman Kaplan called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Bill Meehan made a motion to approve the minutes from April and June, 2011, which was seconded by Junius Brown and carried 7-0-0.

3. Tree Warden's report

Nick Lee distributed the Tree Warden's report, which was prepared by Lars Cherichetti. Lee noted that the Town had to defer to CL&P regarding tree removal after the hurricane. Wilton does not hire private contractors to help clear roads after severe storms. Kaplan questioned whether the tree emergency response plan, which Lee and Kate Throckmorton have been working on, would have made storm clean up easier. It was suggested that Tom Thurkettle be invited to the committee's next meeting in November to provide information on DPW procedures and coordination issues after major storms. Lee will follow up.

4. Ongoing Business

a. Wilton Center Tree Plan Implementation

Lee reported that one of the Adirondack crabapples in front of Village Market needs to be replaced. A new red oak was planted on Old Ridgefield Road in front of the library. However, the fiber optic cable recently put down

in Wilton Center necessitated the temporary pulling up of this tree. DPW, which removed a huge stump near the tree's location, will put it back in its original spot. Kaplan reported that one of the donated benches was painted and/or stained, and that the Norway Maples in front of Keeler's Hardware were significantly damaged by the hurricane. Throckmorton suggested that the next tree to be replaced should be the large maple by the bench at the Veterans' Memorial.

Kaplan and Pat Sesto are in the process of applying for an America the Beautiful Grant (DEEP). The focus of the grant would be tree maintenance in Wilton Center. The proposal will do several things:

- Update the tree inventory from 2008
- Identify trees on public land
- Identify trees on private land that have a public function
- Develop a pruning and maintenance plan
- Reach out to private owners.

Using money from the grant, the town proposes to take care of private trees in a cost-sharing arrangement with private property owners.

Kaplan said that she and Junius Brown had located two spots for these signs, endeavoring to place the signs for maximum visibility:

- Route 7 northbound before the Cannondale intersection sign
- Route 33 and Drum Hill Road at the adopt-a-spot

DPW had earlier indicated its willingness to install the signs; Kaplan will ask Sesto to follow up.

b. Tree Emergency Response Plan Update

Paula Byrdy suggested that the town be aware of where elderly residents are located in case of isolation due to downed trees on their streets. It was noted that CL&P has a register of people whose health or survival depends on electric power. The discussion focused on the desirability of town agencies such as CERT, Social

Services, Fire and Police Departments coordinating their information so that assistance to such residents can be expedited.

5. Other Items

A recent article in *Wilton Magazine* focused on clear cutting trees on private property. Kaplan asked members whether it would be an opportune time to focus on this issue and propose an ordinance to regulate trees on private property. Two purposes of such an ordinance would be to encourage a forested landscape on private property and to minimize soil erosion. The town does have some jurisdiction over trees in wetlands but regulating trees on private property raises many issues. It was suggested that Greenwich may have an ordinance addressing clear cutting. Kaplan will ask Sesto to investigate.

Paula Byrde announced her intention to relocate to Massachusetts. Her last meeting will be in October. Brown has agreed to serve another term. Kaplan asked for suggestions for a new member. Barbara Quincy recommended Nancy Gorkin; Brown will follow up to see if the author of the clear cutting article is interested.

6. Adjourn

Kaplan adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m. **The next meeting will be October 12 at 5 p.m. in the Town Hall Annex.**