

Received: March 11, 2016
10:00 am
Office of the Town Clerk

03-08-2016 Minutes, Town Green Revitalization Project Committee

Attendance: Tina Gossner, Joanne Nytch, Ona McLaughlin, Chad Reddick, Tim Larkin

1. Review Current Finances: 1,371.00 in donations have been received since our last meeting. Current account balances total: \$23,051.24

2. Care for new trees: Tim will add more mulch around the trees and insure that the town crew keeps them watered throughout the spring and summer during dry periods. Tina will purchase more Plant Magic and water that in this spring. We will wait to do any pruning on the new trees until 2017. The Lindens will need some pruning next year. Members will do a walk-through of the green to check on the trees.

3. Tree Dedication Ceremony: The Durham Garden Club has taken on the responsibility of planning the ceremony and reception which are planned for April 23 @ 10:30 am on the town green. The reception will follow at the Durham Public Library. Ona, Etzie, Tina and Joanne met this past winter to assign donor names to the new trees. A total of 12 trees will be dedicated. Ona will order the new tags through the Garden Club. All donors who gave over \$500 will have a tree or multiple trees dedicated with the exception of Carol Magner-Mitchell. She will be assigned the next trees that are planted.

4. Discuss guidelines to protect trees during heavy use of the green: The committee recommends that trees along Town House Road should be circled with fencing during heavy use of the green. This will prevent compaction of the soil and damage to trees. Once trees are planted on the other three sides of the green, the trees should either be circled with a fence or a double set of fencing could be placed, one row of fencing on each side of the tree. Tina and Tim will look into circling the new trees along town house road with wooden stakes and construction tape during moderate use of the green. Tina will check with Laura to see what should be done with our recommendations so that groups using the green are aware of what we hope will happen to protect the trees.

5. Tina filed an America the Beautiful grant application through DEEP for \$4,400. We were awarded the grant. Funds will not become available until the summer of 2016 so we will need to plant those trees after the fair. Laura Francis filed a STEAP grant to place sidewalks along the West side of Main Street, including our pathway on the green. If the town receives these funds, this would mean that we would not have to pay for the pathway (approximately \$16K.) A discussion followed

regarding the necessity of placing bollards along the edge of the path to keep people from driving on the path. Middlesex Foundation Grants are due this summer. We applied for one last year but were not given any funding.

6. Create plan of action for 2016: The committee plans to remove 8 additional trees from the green during 2016. In addition, the town crew removed a large Sugar Maple from the Maple Ave side of the green last week. It had become a safety hazard. Some of the tree removal costs will be covered by the DEEP grant. Some of the trees can be removed by the town crew. The committee plans to plant 13 new trees on the green during 2016. Four can be planted this spring along Main Street. The remaining trees covered by the DEEP grant can be planted after the fair. Tina will seek approval for this plan of action from the Board of Selectmen on March 28 at 7 pm. Committee members are welcome to attend.

Public Comment: Chris Sokol, a prospective Eagle Scout, made a proposal to build a gazebo on the green. The committee's general response was positive but cautioned Chris that this had been tried before and issue arose with complaints from local residents. We urged Chris to conduct surveys through a site such as Survey Monkey and through the Town Times. We also told him that he would need to get it approved by other town committees and the Board of Selectmen. It is important that the structure would be as carefree as possible. Any plantings must be maintenance free.

Other discussions:

- The committee discussed working with the Historical Society to remove the burning bush from in front of their building since it is invasive. We also discussed planting shrubs to hide the electric boxes. Tina will contact them.
- There is no map of the underground electric on the green. When Eversource came last year to do a "call before you dig" visit, they could not help us. Tina will ask Bob Thody if he could create a rough map with John Planeta for future use.
- Chad and Tina will look into placing a sign in front of the cemetery that would list all of the trees on the green. Chad had seen a sign like that in Essex. Russ Hassman of National Sign Corp has promised us a free sign and asked that we consider a student contest to design the sign.