

**OLD LYME TREE COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023, 4:00 PM  
MEMORIAL TOWN HALL  
American Legion Meeting Room**

**Minutes**

**The meeting was held in the American Legion meeting room. The main meeting hall was occupied.**

**Attendance:** Regular members: Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold by telephone. Alternate member: Peter Edmondson

Absent: Fred Behringer, Michael Gaffey, Anne Bing (regular), Tom Degnan, Tree Warden, ex-officio

Guest: Mark Comstock, owner of Hydrangeas Galore in Old Lyme

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mrs. DiCamillo called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

Mrs. DiCamillo welcomed Peter Edmondson to the Commission as an alternate member and authorized him to vote in place of Anne Bing.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

The approval of the 12/7/22 special meeting minutes was postponed to the next meeting because there was not a quorum of members present who attended the December meeting.

The 1/19/23 regular meeting minutes were considered.

*Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Emily Griswold, to approve the 1/19/23 minutes as presented. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, and Emily Griswold voted in favor; Peter Edmondson abstained. Motion passed.*

**BUDGET REPORT**

Mrs. DiCamillo reported the following:

- Budget balances as of 2/3/2023 were: Total \$12,010; Contracted Services \$7,800; Postage \$100, Tree Warden \$1,500, Clerk \$810, Other/Misc. \$1,800
- Carry-over balance \$1,600.
- Invoices: none

**NEW BUSINESS - none**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Ferry Road sidewalk project update:** There is a meeting tomorrow, February 17, with the project engineer, First Selectman Timothy Griswold, and the members of the Ferry

Road Sidewalk Committee to review the grant funding, the project's timeline and to discuss the fence that was installed on the town right of way, bordering the sidewalk that will be replaced. The project has not been put out for bid.

**Presentation to the Board of Selectmen:** Mrs. DiCamillo spoke to the Board of Selectmen at their 2/6/23 meeting. She explained in detail the status of the town's public trees, the need to plant new trees, and the cost of purchasing and planting them. She also explained her difficulty over the years in finding a contractor to water and how expensive it is.

Four trees, planted in 2016, at Town Woods Park were watered for two years after planting by the Duck River Garden Club and the Junior Women's Club. They were well established by last summer and should have been able to withstand the drought.

Unfortunately, they were greatly affected by the lack of water. We need to be able to sustain young trees during these periods to help them grow to maturity.

Three new trees, planted on the North Green last spring were watered by member, Michael Gaffey. He transported water every three days to the site during the summer into fall. They are doing very well. In recent years 148 town trees have been removed and only ten trees planted. She stated that the commission would like to start planting a new generation of trees but are handicapped because we do not have the equipment to water them.

Mrs. DiCamillo informed the selectmen about a new project. Arbor Day is April 28. To mark the day, the Tree Commission would like to purchase a variety of bare root tree seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation and offer them free of charge to town residents on Saturday, April 29. It would be a cost-effective way to meet the goal of the Tree Commission to plant more trees in town while also involving town residents in the event. She requested \$450 to start the project this year. The funds would cover the cost of 350 seedlings (5 bundles of 50 seedlings at \$69 per bundle) with approximately \$100 available to pay for miscellaneous supplies and the printing of planting instructions. Since the funds were available in the Contracted Services line item of the commission's budget, The Board of Selectmen approved moving \$450 from the Contracted Services line item to Other/Misc. to purchase the seedlings and supplies. Mrs. DiCamillo thanked them and also mentioned that the commission has been gathering information regarding tree inventory and the importance of conducting one to determine the species, health, size, and number of town trees.

**Tree Seedling project update, discussion, and selection:** When Mrs. DiCamillo called the Arbor Day Foundation to inquire about the process for ordering and shipping last week, she was told that the seedlings sell out quickly. She immediately emailed the members to send their choices to her. Fred Behringer was the only member who responded to her email. She went on to explain that when she visited the web site once again, this week, she was surprised to learn that the price of the seedling bundles had

increased from \$69 to \$79 per bundle. That increase indicates the number of bundles we order will be smaller than originally planned. She also said that a decision should be made now on the number and the variety. The members finalized the number, and each member selected their choices of seedlings.

*Emily Griswold made a motion, seconded by Peter Edmondson, to order 5 bundles of 50 tree seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation at a cost of \$79 per bundle. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, and Peter Edmondson voted in favor; motion passed.*

The tree seedling varieties available from the Arbor Day Foundation are Black Hills spruce, Norway spruce, Colorado blue spruce, burr oak, eastern white pine, northern red oak, pin oak, redbud, red maple, river birch, scarlet oak, silver maple, sugar maple, tulip tree, white fir, white spruce, white dogwood. The members discussed the selections at length, considering zone hardiness, fall color, spring flowers, likelihood of deer browsing, and decided to order a mix of shade trees, flowering and one evergreen.

*Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Peter Edmondson, to order scarlet oak, sugar maple, white dogwood, redbud, and white spruce. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, and Peter Edmondson voted in favor; motion passed.*

Mrs. DiCamillo will order the seedlings without delay and request delivery several days prior to the event to Fred Behringer's address. They will be offered to residents of Old Lyme free of charge on Saturday, April 29, 2023. Emily Griswold will oversee the publicity for the event. There was a discussion regarding the purchase of paper towels and baggies to use for keeping the individual bare-root seedlings in storage until the event. The Arbor Day contact suggested that this process will help to protect the roots from breaking, which is crucial to their development.

Mark Comstock generously offered to donate plastic pots, soil, space in his nursery and his expertise to help pot the seedlings if the commission would like to do that. The members thanked him. Mrs. DiCamillo stated that a decision will be made at the next meeting.

Mrs. DiCamillo mentioned that Newport, RI has a highly successful tree planting program that involves the community. The Tree Commission offers trees at a discount to residents. The trees are planted on their property by the Public Works Dept. and the homeowner's water and care for the trees. The trees sell out every year.

**Tree inventory update:** Michael Gaffey and Fred Behringer are willing to start a tree inventory of the trees in town parks. They will meet with the tree warden who will advise them on the tools needed and what data to collect. Michael Gaffey has been working on creating a template for entering data into Excel.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs. DiCamillo asked for a motion to add two items to the agenda under Other Business: A Spotted Lantern Fly handout from the CAES, and a recommendation from Bartlett Tree Experts to treat the tree lilac for fungus.

*Emily Griswold made a motion, seconded by Joan Flynn, to add the spotted lantern fly handout and the Bartlett Tree Service tree lilac treatment to the agenda under Other Business. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, and Peter Edmondson voted in favor; motion passed.*

Mrs. DiCamillo read a bulletin about Spotted Lantern Fly from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). The handout had photos of the spotted lantern fly and its egg cases, and instructions on how to identify and report the insects to CAES. People may send a photo, and/or collect a specimen, and report the location where the insect or egg cases are found. The handout includes a form to fill out and return to CAES in New Haven.

Bartlett Tree Experts sent a proposal to the commission for treating the Tree Lilac for a fungus, which has been impacting the tree for the past two years and is particularly noticeable in the fall. This would be the third treatment at a cost of \$268. The commission agreed to see how the tree looks in the spring before deciding to treat it.

Mark Comstock, owner of Hydrangeas Galore in Old Lyme, offered to help the Tree Commission in any way – watering trees, planting trees, etc.

Mrs. DiCamillo read an article to the members about a budget request for \$250,000 to the City of Stamford mayor's office by the Board of Representatives' Operations Committee. They are asking the administration to fund a GIS survey of all trees on city property, a water tank truck, new plantings, and an additional parks employee to manage city trees. They want each city tree geo-located, photographed, and the species, size and condition recorded. The city has lost many trees to summer drought because the city lacks the resources to water them. Their situation is like ours.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Emily Griswold, to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, and Peter Edmondson voted in favor; motion passed.*

**Next regular meeting: March 16, 2023, at 4:00 P.M.**

Martha Hansen, Clerk