

**OLD LYME TREE COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023, 4:00 PM
MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
MEETING HALL
Minutes**

Attendance: Regular members: Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold by telephone.
Alternate members: Peter Edmondson, Fred Behringer
Absent: Michael Gaffey (regular), Anne Bing (regular), Tom Degnan, Tree Warden, ex-officio
Guest: Mark Comstock, owner of Hydrangeas Galore in Old Lyme

CALL TO ORDER

Joanne DiCamillo called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm

Mrs. DiCamillo made a motion, seconded by Joan Flynn, to authorize Fred Behringer to vote in place of Michael Gaffey. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, and Emily Griswold voted in favor; motion passed.

Mrs. DiCamillo made a motion, seconded by Joan Flynn, to authorize Peter Edmondson to vote in place of Anne Bing. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Fred Behringer, and Emily Griswold voted in favor. Motion passed.

CLERK'S REPORT

Approval of the 12/7/22 special meeting minutes

Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Fred Behringer, to approve the 12/7/22 minutes as presented. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, and Fred Behringer voted in favor; Peter Edmondson abstained. Motion passed.

Approval of 2/16/23 regular meeting minutes – Mrs. DiCamillo asked for a change under the heading, Presentation to the Board of Selectmen; \$450 was not moved from Contracted Services, it was deducted from Other/Misc. line item to purchase the tree seedlings.

Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Peter Edmondson, to approve the 2/16/23 minutes as corrected. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Peter Edmondson, and Emily Griswold voted in favor; Fred Behringer abstained. Motion passed.

BUDGET REPORT

Mrs. DiCamillo did not receive an update this month on the budget balance from the Finance Director. She authorized two payments since the last report, a payment of \$93 to the Clerk for preparing the 2/16/23 meeting minutes and \$450 to The Arbor Day Foundation for the tree seedlings and associated expenses. She was not certain if they were paid and posted.

- 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 - 2

OLD BUSINESS

Ferry Road Sidewalk Committee 2-17-23 meeting - update

Mrs. DiCamillo reported that First Selectman, Tim Griswold, will send a letter to the owners of 11 Ferry, notifying them that their fence must be moved back from the sidewalk and Town property.

When the owners met with First Selectman Tim Griswold and Project Engineer Wade Thomas in December, they asked if the town could make a design change so the fence could remain in place. Mr. Thomas did a partial redesign that created four improved parking spots but could not relocate the new sidewalk far enough away from the fence. He estimated the changes would increase the cost of the project by approximately \$16,000 and recommended that the fence be moved. The committee members agreed.

Mr. Griswold and Mr. Thomas will contact the DOT to request a one-year extension of the STEAP Grant due to project delays. The sidewalk project is estimated to begin in September 2023.

Mrs. DiCamillo read a proposal from Bartlett Tree Experts recommending spring treatment for the Ferry Road trees that will not be removed. Mr. Thomas recommended that the fertilizing be postponed, waiting nearer to the start date to fertilize. Mrs. DiCamillo expressed concern about the impact of last summer's drought on the trees.

She asked commission member, arborist Peter Edmondson, for his recommendation. He stated that the fertilizing should be done now to help the trees to recover from any effects from the drought and to strengthen the root systems before the construction begins.

Tree Inventory update

Michael, Fred, Joanne

Fred Behringer reported that he has been working on how to organize the inventory using the town's GIS system. He passed around a GIS map of Hains Park which outlined the park boundaries. GIS maps are very helpful in identifying where a tree inventory should be done. The Tree Inventory data would be entered into an Excel spreadsheet that can be easily updated. Mrs. DiCamillo recently consulted with one of the IT specialists, who is working on updating the town's web site, about creating an Excel spreadsheet for the data collected in the inventory. He told her there is not enough space on the town's server to store the information. He recommended using Google Docs to store the Tree Inventory database. It can be shared with the members and, eventually, the information can be transferred and stored on the server when the space is available.

Mrs. DiCamillo announced that the grant, America the Beautiful, will be offered by the DEEP Division of Urban Forestry in the fall. The funds can be used for inventory and tree planting.

Tree watering

Joanne DiCamillo spoke with Tim Griswold about watering the town trees that were recently planted at the Transit Hub. It will become the responsibility of the Tree Commission to maintain them. Last summer Former Selectwoman Mary Jo Nosal pulled hoses from the police station, across the road, to water the trees, but that cannot be a long-term solution. There should be a better, more efficient method. Mrs. DiCamillo asked Mr. Griswold to confer with Fred Behringer, Michael Gaffey, and Peter Edmondson to find a solution. Peter Edmondson stated that Sherrill Arbor Supply and Site One Landscaping both sell watering supplies and 250-gallon water tanks that will fit into a pick-up truck.

Arbor Day Event

Joanne, Emily

- Order and shipping - Joanne DiCamillo worked with Amy Jensen in the Finance Dept. to order the seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation. Five bundles of fifty seedlings were ordered, for \$79 per bundle. There was a \$10 charge to confirm the shipping date. Mrs. DiCamillo also ordered 2,000 brochures with planting instructions at a cost of \$10. The seedlings will be shipped on / about April 17 to Mrs. DiCamillo's home. The total for everything was \$414.95, with a balance of \$35.05 remaining in the \$450 budget.
- Brochures - After the brochures were ordered the Arbor Day Foundation reported that the brochures were out of stock. Reprinting could take 3-5 weeks. The foundation posted a pdf file on their web site where the brochure can be downloaded. Mrs. DiCamillo will cancel the order and ask for the \$10 charge to be credited back to the town.
- Publicity - Emily Griswold has been working on event publicity. A notice will be published on Facebook and on LymeLine.com. Flyers will be posted around town. Joanne DiCamillo will make an announcement at the next meeting of the Duck River Garden Club and ask to have the information published in their newsletter.
- Time and place, speaker – The seedlings will be free for residents of Old Lyme on Saturday, April 29, from 10 am to 12 pm at the Memorial Town Hall, 52 Lyme Street. Residents can choose up to three different seedlings, a shade tree, an ornamental tree, and an evergreen. Varieties available will be scarlet oak, sugar maple, white dogwood, redbud, and white spruce.
- Pot-up seedlings- Mrs. DiCamillo invited guest Mark Comstock of Hydrangeas Galore to speak about planting the seedlings. He offered to provide pots and potting soil at no charge and invited the Tree Commission members to come to his nursery to help with the planting before the event. Potting up the seedlings will increase their survival rate. The seedlings can be sunk in their pots in a garden and watered. If there are any left after the event, Mark volunteered to grow them for a year in his nursery at no charge. Everyone agreed that it was a great idea and nearly everyone was available to help. Mrs. DiCamillo will email the members and Mark when the seedlings arrive.

Public Comment - none

NEW BUSINESS

Request from Open Space Commission – commission member Anne Redfield emailed Mrs. DiCamillo about obtaining seedlings to use for a planting project. She specified oak, dogwood, and redbud as their choices. The Tree Commission members agreed to see how many varieties are left after the event to determine a number.

Pew Charitable Trusts article - Mrs. DiCamillo reported that the article was written shortly after the announcement that \$1.5 billion will be available from the Inflation Reduction Act for the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry program. These funds could help to significantly upgrade the program, currently at \$36 million, and be a major source for tree planting and maintenance nationwide. She will try to learn more about this funding.

Joanne asked Mark Comstock to speak about his conversation with Tim Griswold regarding the declining tree canopy in town. Mark explained that he would like to grow trees for the town and set aside a section of his nursery at no charge for the Tree Commission. Mr. Griswold asked him about maintenance and funding. Mr. Comstock stated that he would like to involve like-minded people in town to help water the trees. There may be a need for private funding. A 275-gallon cattle watering bucket with gravity fed hoses would work for watering and fit in the back of a pickup truck.

Mrs. DiCamillo reminded the commission that homeowners on Ferry Road have requested new trees to replace the ones that will be taken down. Certain residents are only here on occasion and would need assistance with watering the new trees.

Adjournment

Joan Flynn made a motion, seconded by Peter Edmondson, to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m. Joanne DiCamillo, Joan Flynn, Emily Griswold, Fred Behringer, and Peter Edmondson voted in favor. Motion passed.

Next regular meeting: April 20, 2023, at 4:00 P.M.

Martha Hansen, Clerk