

Craftsbury Municipal Forest Committee

Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2023, 6:30 pm, Town Hall

Members in attendance: Ann Ingerson, Stuart LaPoint, Jim Moffatt, Rob Libby, Robert Linck, Chris Sanville, Jane Solomon

Members not attending: Barbara Alexander, Ben Alexander, Jim Jones, Logan Jones

Freedom and Unity Task Force

Daniel Solomon spoke on behalf of the Freedom and Unity Task Force, which is working to improve democratic participation in town decision-making. This task force is grappling with reduced attendance at in-person town meetings, compared with the ballot vote participation during Covid. They will hold two public meetings to seek public input, on the evening of October 17, and on November 5 from 1:00-4:00. Task Force members are reaching out to town committees and other community groups to encourage them to attend.

New Member

Mike Renaud would like to join the committee. For the past several years, Mike has donated his time and equipment to prune the Common trees. Regular pruning promotes public safety, and also reduces the need for Hardwick Electric to trim around power lines, which doesn't always prioritize tree health. Ann will pass this request along to the Select Board, which makes committee appointments.

Damage to Hop Hornbeam on the Common

At Antiques and Uniques, Jeff Fellingner accidentally clipped the hop hornbeam at the south end of the Common with his trailer. He offered to replace the tree. After checking out the damage, committee members agreed we should plant a replacement nearby, while also leaving the original tree in case it recovers. Stuart LaPoint found a potted tree we could plant this summer, at a cost of \$149 plus tax, and Rob Libby offered to help water the tree after planting. We propose splitting the cost with Jeff, with the town share to come from the logging account. Ann will pass that proposal on to the Select Board.

Ash Survey

Rob Libby reported that he and Brian Machesney have made progress inventorying ash "hot spots" along town roads (~500 trees so far). They will probably finish up their survey by next year. Emerald ash borer has not yet been spotted in town, but has been confirmed nearby.

Rob will investigate what it takes to treat particularly good specimens with injected insecticide. The sense of the committee is that the one ash on the Common might not be the best candidate for treatment since it could be shaded out over time by adjacent maples.

Town Forest Signs

We agreed to install the town forest signs at Coburn Hill during our next on-site committee meeting. We need Logan Jones' help to local boundaries using his phone GPS.

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Tree Planting

Stuart continues his interest in planting trees along the Black River. In addition to landowners near Cemetery Road and Black River Road, he has recently contacted several landowners along the Creek Road stretch of the river. In general, landowners are open to planting but not interested in long-term commitments.

Stuart will contact Sarah Damsell (who presented about options at our meeting last September) for details about programs that might not require a landowner contract. If existing program funding doesn't match our needs, Stuart would like to see us use some of the town logging fund to purchase trees. Not all committee members agree with this use of funds on private land, so this requires more discussion in future.

Next Meeting – Thursday, October 19, 5:30, Coburn Hill Lot

Meet at the self-storage, corner of Wild Branch and Collinsville roads to carpool.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.