

**City of Essex Junction  
Tree Advisory Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
December 19, 2023**

Members Present: Nick Meyer, Rich Boyers, Nicole Klett, Max Seaton, Steve Rivard  
In attendance virtually Warren Spinner  
Citizen: Carl Houghton  
City Representative: Ashley Snellenberger in attendance virtually

**I. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 pm by Nick, second by Steve.

**II. Additions or Amendments to Agenda**

Greatest Tree Contest wrap up. Tree City USA update.

**III. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the October 2023 meeting minutes was made by Rich, second by Steve.

**IV. Maple Street Park Tree Walk Improvements**

Nick took pics of brochures and sign at the entryway. Warren stated we lost tree #17. Opportunity to add new trees including elms. A few of the replacement trees that have had some vandalism.

Sign that was on the backside of the park was vandalized.

Nick noted artistry and emphasis on trees on the sign at Niquette park and Nicole added the ideas of following a walk and better direction on the sign. All agreed that orientation on the sign wasn't clear. So that sign can be timeless, change its purpose as an introduction and have QR code on it that will give specific details on the park as it is at the time. The sign won't have to be so specific to show all trees but orient the public to walk and where to start. QR codes can have references to the next tree on the walk so the walk can be dynamic and change as needed. Rich reminded TAC that having specific directions in the park to follow trails in addition to tree signage is important.

Pamphlets in ERJP in office instead of outside for alternative to QR codes. Pamphlets could be edited from masterdoc to reflect changes in walk/trees.

Rich also thought of the option of an audio tour by Warren.

Ashley says the biggest cost is the outside tour and we can do pamphlets and audio recording in house.

Nicole continues to reach out to the Forestry and CTE group. Rich can try science colleagues as well.

Ashley uses SB signs and they can likely do this type of signage.

May need to reach out for designers on sign and may need the map revamped. Facts should include climate change and tips for the public on helping trees.

Nicole will reach out to CTE or EHS Science classes for design collaboration and for graphic designers.

Consider QR code at front and at individual trees with attached PDFs and have audio recordings and see how that might work

Ashley can help with design if no school collaboration

Aim for Arbor Day as a grand opening. May need to push out to Summer.

## **V. Tree City USA**

Warren spoke with Ashley about the application for Tree City USA. They are going to work on the website for the application with new login info.

May need to answer questions like what does being designated tree city mean etc and may need input from TAC, city and citizens.

Warren and Ashley will meet to work on the application together. Nick reminded Warren about logging in the volunteer hours and Warren would like TAC members to turn in volunteer hours to him by Thursday.

## **VI. Tree Planting 2024**

Nick and Warren informed TAC that 23 trees that are available to pull out from the nursery, very diverse species and want to continue work in the Ash tree neighborhoods. We may need to knock on doors in the neighborhoods. Cutting down and replacements at this point. Could put 12 trees on Old Colchester Rd.

Busy roads and developments that are lacking could be new territory. West St has opportunities besides Hiawatha and the old tree nursery there. South Summit is another area. Nick would like TAC to look at places and focus on a few places to put several trees instead of spacing out individual trees due to watering.

Will pick a school to do an Arbor Day Tree planting in the new year.

Rick and his DPW team are available for cutting down trees.

## **VII. Development Updates Pocket Park and 17 Park St**

Warren reports that city planner, Jennifer Marbl, is working with Chris in the planning office and is working with development projects in the city. She and Warren met. She had a question about 17 Park St. There is a developer for that parcel who has complaints about using silva cells. She can go back to the applicant and let them know that the city wants four trees in front of that building.

Other development projects including 8 Railroad Street. There is a building being planned with no footprint for landscape development.

132 Pearl St with landscape plan presented with no specific listing of trees to be utilized.

229 Pearl with a landscape architect with comprehensive landscape plans.

Crescent Connector is going well with being able to see plans for landscaping and pocket park plans in place with Rick Hamlin, Ginkgo Design and Warren and Jennifer with emphasis on good soil and protecting whatever trees get planted.

Nick is glad that planning code really leads to collaboration of the city, developer and TAC. Also, landscaping is getting prioritized for developers in actual planting in lieu of just having a fund for it. Stronger compliance seems to be where the new emphasis is.

### VIII. 2024 TAC Calendar

Nicole will put a folder together to capture info for PSAs.

<b>January</b> -Planning Calendar and setting up folder
<b>February</b> -Public Education around Tree Work/Trimming (Winter is the time to reach out to arborist)-
<b>March</b> -Public Education around Thinking about planting a tree
<b>April</b> - Tree Sale /National Arbor Day
<b>May</b> -Tree Planting /VT Arbor Day @ named school
<b>June</b> -Tree Walk 2nd annual!
<b>July</b> -Public Education around Tree Planting/Maintenance/Watering
<b>August</b> -Advertise Tree Contest
<b>September</b> -Form Submission for Tree Contest open after Labor Day
<b>October</b> -Judging and Announcement of Tree Contest Winner
<b>November</b> -Public Education around Trees in Fall (Best Handling of Leaves, etc)
<b>December</b> -Public Education around Tree Decorating/Tradition of Cutting down Christmas Tree

### IX. Budget

EJ puts \$2.07 into tree activities which helps with candidacy of Essex Junction for Tree City USA, etc.

The 2024-2025 proposed city budget shows a 7% tax increase. The city may wish to reduce the TAC budget as well as other city budgets to reduce the overall tax increase.

Dollars are left in the TAC budget for this year, which will be used for the spring tree planting and maintenance. Still waiting to hear about that.

## **X. Greatest Tree Contest**

Nicole noted that the Nominating form needs to be more specific about the location of the trees, permission for TAC to be on the land where the tree is, and having a parent give consent. Rich and Nicole will update folder with ideas

We can meet again in the spring before launching in midsummer. Hoping to get more sponsors for the contest and higher prize amounts. More coverage in the media is needed esp for thanking sponsors.

## **XII. Other Business**

None

## **IX. Date for Next Meeting**

The Committee will meet on January 16, 2024 at 4:30 p.m with agreement from committee members for the time change.

## **Adjournment**

Nick made a motion to adjourn at 5:50 pm Steve, 2nd Max.