

Town of Red Hook

DRAFT

Tree Preservation Commission

Minutes for June 21, 2022

1. Attendance: *Chairman Cathy Michael, George (Hop) Michael, Codie Hay, Doug Traudt, Eleanor Friery, Liaison Jacob Testa and secretary Linda Keeling*

Absent: *Dave Grover and Karen Cadorette*

Guests: *Alisha Riepma*

2. Call to Order: There were 4/7 in attendance for a quorum. Chairman Cathy Michael called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and handed out an agenda.

Quote of the Month: **“When I Am Among the Trees”** by Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
would almost say that they save me, and daily.

Corrections:

1. Page 1: guest’s name change “Alicia” to “Alisha”
2. Page 2: b: remove “the bare root” to “each tree”
3. Page 2: c: last line add “truck is moving” eliminate “driven”
4. Page 2: f: line 3 add “of” after trees.
5. Page 3: c: Line 3 eliminate “which was fine”, add “Because for since. Add “There was extra money which was used to buy pruners for Tree Cities.”
6. Page 2: d: Eleanor clarified Codie Hay came for one of the lessons and she did 13 herself.

MOTION: *Eleanor Friery* motioned to approve the Minutes from May 17, 2022 with corrections and *Doug Traudt* seconded, all approved.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Update on tree at high school: *Hop Michael* reported the tree was planted at the high school, watered, deer fence installed. Six weeks ago the school watered.

b. Update on trees on Pitcher Lane: *Hop Michael* reported watching one tree on the southside and one on the northside hit by a mover. Dug holes and deer fencing erected, looking better now. The crimson tree that we thought wasn't looking good is fine now. There's one on the north side that has a competing central leader. Hop wants Codie to look at it.

c. Update on trees at Rec Park West: *Chairman Cathy Michael* reported she took a walk there last weekend and all looks good. The River Birch that was potted is growing well. John Kuhn will water the trees at least three times per week.

d. Missing Tree City Sign Near Rock City: *Chairman Cathy Michael* contacted the Highway Superintendent and she doesn't know of it turning up. *Hop Michael* called the State Highway Department and they don't have it. *Doug Traudt* said he looked to see if he could find it but was unsuccessful. Perhaps someone took the sign and pole for their own use. As a result, we will have to replace it. The other three entrance signs to the town received their 16 year stickers.

e. Mill Road School Proposal: *Doug Traudt, Codie Hay, Dave Grover, Cathy and Hop Michael* walked the property. Codie was a major contributor. The Commission reviewed it before going to the school. Some discussion focused on the salting composition the school uses, for example, is it a shared municipal salt from town hall or does the school district use their own stock pile. The Chairman will investigate this.

Chairman Cathy Michael presented a one page document specifying three areas or issues considered.

1. There are five mature crabapple trees parallel to Mill Road. Three (#s 1, 3 & 5 south to north) are smaller, with diseased foliage, dead wood and poor form.

Recommendation:

- Remove the 2 smaller crabapples trees (#s 2 & 4) and the stumps.
- Remove dead wood and lightly prune the remaining 3 mature crabapples.
- Consider planting a specimen tree in the large space between #3 & 5 (larger northern space). This will help transition the site beyond the expected life of the three remaining/maintained crabapples.

2. The east-west curbed 14' median between the NW parking / bus lot and the 3-5 exit driveway has 4 relatively small sugar maple trees in varying stages of decline.

Numbered from west to east.

#1: Poor form with severe maple decline

#2: Poor form, moderate decline & trunk bark damage

#3: Form relatively okay but trunk bark damage

#4: Root ball disturbed, tree leaning, and trunk bark damage.

Sugar maple is not a species suited for confined small sites surrounded by pavement and curbing. Decline and failure to thrive is the observed and expected outcome for these trees. The root-ball disturbance and trunk bark damage are probably from snow plowing.

Recommendation:

- Removal of all 4 trees

Evaluate snow removal challenges of the site. If re-planting consider spacing new plantings differently to avoid snowplow damage and choose species that are suitable for confined spaces (such as redbud).

3. There are three over-grown multi-trunk crabapples adjacent to the sidewalk from the 3-5 wing south end to the southwest parking lot.

Recommendation:

- Remove dead wood and prune to an aesthetic shape
- Selective pruning on an adjacent maple tree.

Issues to discuss:

1. Work to be done when school is not in session.
2. Brush removal: Is the school able to manage the brush clean-up or will the Commission be required to remove it?
3. Stump removals from 2 crabapples (school or Tree Commission?)
4. Wood from tree removals (2 crabapples and 4 relatively small maples).

d. Nancy Guski's Tree Replacement: Again, the Tree Commission discussed a replacement tree and a possible location. The Kasura was doing well for three years then just died. A different species will be selected. *Linda Keeling* suggested near the Highway Department's building where other trees were dedicated. The Chairman will investigate this possibility. There was a question about the former plaque's location.

e. Tree Inventory: The Chairman reminded all that we need to work on updating this inventory. The Chairman said Karen Cadorette was in charge of this but has not been to some meetings. *Linda Keeling* suggested contacting Brenda Cagle from the Village Green as she was the former chair that worked on the inventory.

f. Arbor Day Event: *Eleanor Friery* went over her one page report of the happenings at the school:

Arbor Day Poster Contest: About 400 students participated in the Poster Contest. There were submissions from Kindergarten to Fifth grade.

The 23 winning posters were displayed at the Town Hall for our Arbor Day Celebration. The book prizes were given to some of the students on Arbor Day. K-2 students received their awards the day before. A congratulatory note from the Tree Commission was pasted in each prize book. The posters were returned to the participants.

Nature Trail Lessons: Seven classes of first grade and six classes of third grade pupils were taught about trees in the Outdoor Classroom. Nancy Guski and Codie Hay helped with one lesson. First graders and Third graders had a 45 minute educational walk on the Trail with a focus on the animal habitats and past history of the land area. I, once again, spoke a lot about decomposition since so many trees are down! All students received “tree cookie” necklaces thanks to Cathy and Hop Michael providing the wood pieces. The Michaels also put together necklaces ready for decorating.

Unfortunately, no pictures of the Contest winners are available. The 3-5 principal gave the awards at an assembly at the new auditorium and my iPad camera did not work in the K-2 lobby.

Eleanor Friery is looking forward to training a person to take over her position. She is willing to purchase the books for the Commission.

Linda Keeling suggested trying to get high school students interested in what we are doing. They could dig holes, mulch, plant trees, take pictures, assist with the inventory, etc. It’s an opportunity for the children to pick up new skills, knowledge and maybe foster an interest in becoming an arborist, forester or environmentalist.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Order Two New Signs:

The Chairman will talk to the local Sign Shop about a bigger and wind resistant sign for Arbor Day.

The metal pole will be purchased locally but the Tree City sign will have to be investigated if we can get a replacement.

MOTION: *Eleanor Friery* motioned the Tree Commission purchase two new signs, *Hop Michael* seconded, all agreed.

b. Pollinator Course: *Linda Keeling* reported she attended the event at the Community Center. She presented materials collected along with the information that pollinator packaged seeds are available for free at the Center in the You Make Room in the basement. There are also gardening books available to use.

c. Devereaux Site: The 3 fringe trees failed to thrive. There are still three hot wing maples and a hawthorn (subject to apple diseases) are doing well.

5. Adjourned: 7:58 pm. Motioned by *Doug Traudt*, seconded by *Eleanor Friery*, all agreed.

6. Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 19th at 7 pm, town hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, TC Secretary