

Minutes
Conservation Commission
September 20, 2023

Attendance: David Miller, Chair, Steve Cohn, Tom Boulay, Ann Storer, Martha Hoyt, Elaine Vreeland, Administrator.

Discussion to determine if the Conservation Commission will sponsor the following article at fall Town Meeting:

ARTICLE X: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 18 Section 6 (a) of the Public Shade Tree Bylaw of the Town's General Bylaws, by replacing Section 6 (a) thereof with the following:

The town shall have a Permanent Street Tree Committee that consists of five members, with each member serving for a three year term. These members include a representative from, and appointed by, each of the Conservation Commission, the Design Review Committee, the Planning Board, the Climate Action Advisory Committee, along with an at-large member to be appointed by the Select Board. Additionally, the following Town staff: the Tree Warden (or their designee), the Town Planner (or their designee), the Tree City USA liaison, and the Town's Sustainability Director, shall be permitted to participate in the Committee's deliberations in a non-voting capacity. The Committee may appoint up to two non-voting, associate members. Upon the effective date of this bylaw, all terms of any existing Committee members shall cease and new appointments shall be made, with such initial appointments expiring on June 30, 2026;

This Article would amend the existing section 6(a) of the town's Permanent Street Tree Committee bylaw (below) by allowing for three-year staggered terms and allowing town employees to participate. It eliminates the Town Forest Committee, (as it no longer exists), and creates positions for other organizations.

Section 6: PERMANENT STREET TREE COMMITTEE

(a) The town shall have a Permanent Street Tree Committee that consists of five members, including representatives from the Conservation Commission, Design Review Committee, Planning Board and Town Forest Committee as well as the town's tree warden, as appointed by the Board of Selectmen. For the first appointments, two members will serve one-year terms; two members will serve two-year terms; and one member shall serve a three-year term. All members up for renewal will then serve three-year terms. The committee shall be staffed by the town planner and the Tree City USA liaison, as appropriate.

(b) The tree committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities as may be further specified in this by-law:

- (1) Development of rules, regulations, tree inventory, manuals and other data, in conjunction with the tree warden, to carry out the purposes and intent of this by-law, for approval and promulgation by the Board of Selectmen;
- (2) Public education and coordination with other town committees and civic groups to promote the purposes and intent of this by-law;
- (3) Work in conjunction with the Tree Warden to seek grants or other assistance concerning the preservation and maintenance of trees in town.

David began the meeting noting that he had prepared a presentation on public trees in summer of 2023, noting that public trees are located on any town property. He continued that this committee would be advisory to the Select Board, and recommendations must be vetted by the Department of Public Works. If a recommendation is deemed worthwhile, it would be adopted and funded. The overriding goal is to establish a program where more trees are planted than removed.

He stated that the DPW had cut 55 unsafe trees in 2022 and had replaced only 12. He compared this to the City of Malden which planted 200-600 trees in roughly the same period. He added that Winchester does not have a trained tree warden on staff.

It was moved and seconded to approve the following motion: To sponsor the change of Chapter 18 section 6(a) of Public Shade Tree bylaw by modifying it according to the language in Article X.

A roll call vote was taken and all members in attendance voted in favor. The motion passed.

Submitted by: Elaine Vreeland

