

2017 0809 Forestry and Beautification meeting minutes approved 091317

Attendees: Georgette Cole, Chair; Audrey Maskery, Cynthia Werts

Residents Kathi Carey-Fletcher, Jay Everhart, Kathy Lehman, Joan Mahaffey, Sharon Sisson, Steve Werts, and Missy Yachup also attended.

Agenda Item 3 (Discuss possible replacement of the bamboo near the Maintenance Shed) was moved to the front since the majority of the resident attendees came for this discussion. Summary as presented by Audrey Maskery and Steve Werts: The bamboo is a non-native invasive species. In the winter it creates a problem for Maintenance as ice/snow cause it to fall over into the Maintenance shed area where it blocks access to the shed and to walkers trying to get through on Center Street. The bamboo grove has been increasing in area over the last 30+ years and was impinging on the Maintenance yard and enveloping the trees planted in Woodward Park on the west side of the grove. The bamboo roots extend south and west toward the tennis courts and Grove Road. Bamboo would grow here if the area was not mowed regularly. The grove was recently reduced in size taking it back several feet on both east and west sides so the trees and the marble pediment are now visible. The bamboo roots in this area were ground out which will keep the bamboo from replacing itself rapidly. The current proposal is to add a board-on-board fence on the Maintenance shed side, then to start replacing the remaining bamboo in about 1/3 segments. As each segment is ground out Steve would replace it with an earth berm to help smother new growth, and then plant screening trees like Thuja Green Giant on the berm in the area facing Grove Road.

Public comment covered a range of topics including, but not limited to:

- Missy said her son and his friends enjoyed the bamboo forest as children. She strongly encouraged preservation of the bamboo for the new generation of children now in Summer-In-The-Parks (SITP).
- Kathy Lehman stated she liked the current level of clearing out because we could see the marble piece from the Old PO in DC and because it gave more room to maneuver down there. She did not want to see the bamboo removed and hoped the Town would just continue to maintain it as it is right now.
- Kathi Carey-Fletcher objected to the loss of wildlife habitat
- Jay asked how many square feet were present and how much effort was expended in control/year. He spoke of how hard it was to control.
- Steve said about 50x100 feet and described how he has removed bamboo growing on the northwest side of the Maintenance shed.
- Sharon asked if it was possible to keep maintaining it as it now stands
- Audrey read out a letter from Tom Land objecting to the removal of the bamboo

Georgette said a summary of the groups thoughts would be assembled for Audrey to take to the Town Council.

Kathi C-F asked about bamboo on private land in Town. The town has no control over what is planted on private property. It is true that what private owners' plant can create problems for Town Maintenance. The bamboo at 406 Grove Avenue falls into Chestnut Road during snow/ice and has to be removed by Maintenance to allow normal car access.

Agenda Item 2 (Planning for Fall Tree planting)

Audrey spoke to the benefits of Town residents also planting more trees on their own property. The tendency over at least the past 10 years has been to remove large trees like oak and replace them with smaller trees like redbuds and dogwoods. The Tree Montgomery Initiative was discussed. This program has been written up for the bulletin before but we agreed it would be good to do another article to encourage town residents to plant more heritage trees (covers agenda item 4).

Areas to focus on this fall include Lower Ridge Road (a white pine and leatherleaf viburnum requested by John Tomlin), Maple Road near 410 Oak St has a large open space perfect for an American Beech (probably a large caliper tree), Woodward Park at the southeast end has lost several trees recently and is in strong need of replacements.

Discussion of problem trees: Kathy L would like the pin oak on Chestnut Ave near her to be added to the fall pruning roster as it has been dropping more branches. Jay would like consideration of removing the privet bushes in front of his home on Grove Avenue as they have gotten leggy and unsightly. Concern for the new American Beeches on Oak Street and Grove Road was brought up. It seems early for them to be getting yellow. Jay recommended soil testing. He will talk to Georgette about how to do this. It costs about \$18 per soil sample and is sent to a lab in Richmond. Steve also suggested riding out to Ace Tree Nursery and seeing what the American Beeches there look like.

New Business: Joan asked about the Stadler tree buying process. She would like to do it with us this year since she hasn't done it before. All agreed this was a good idea. The Woods Committee would like some of the Stadler size trees for the area of West Woods next to Saybrooke. There is a very bare area where Saybrooke encroachments were removed. Woods Committee wants to fill in and to use a group like Stadler who will come install the trees.

Next meeting September 13

Adjourn 8:45 pm.

Submitted by Georgette Cole, F&B Chair