

Bedford Arbor Resources Committee (BARC)

Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 13, 2023 7:30PM

Because of the social distancing restrictions imposed by COVID 19, this was a virtual meeting conducted by ZOOM and facilitated by David Manugian.

Attendees

Chair: Molly Haskell. Committee: Dan Churella, Deb Edinger, Jaci Edwards, Bobbi Tornheim, Dan Smythe, Elizabeth Knox.

DPW: David Manugian. Tree Warden: Nick Pouliot. Select Board Liaison: [Not Present]

Public: Ashim Joshi.

Opening

Meeting called to order by the chair at 7:31PM, followed by attendance, reading of remote Open Meeting Law statement and notice that the Town of Bedford was recording the meeting.

Discussion of Tree Hearing proceedings from 26 May 2022: Invitation to Mr. Joshi to ask questions and provide comment regarding tree under review for removal at 50 Summer St.

- Mr. Joshi: The tree falls right on the proposed driveway. Economically, very expensive for us to move driveway location at this point—would have to go back to architect and have them change plans. Have gone through zoning board, long process. Realized too late that the tree belonged to the town.
- <Questions from Ms. Haskell, Ms. Edwards: regarding moving garages to edge of property? Mr. Churella: can driveway be curved to avoid tree? Response from Mr. Joshi: We were told side entry garages were not allowed because of zoning restrictions. Mr. Joshi said curving driveway was not possible because of need for two driveways, one per each housing unit.>
- Mr. Churella: Provides statistics of tree value to town, tree benefits, tree age.
- Mr. Joshi: A tree was taken down at 28 Summer St, I expected to be treated the same.
 - Mr. Churella: I believe in that case the tree was in bad health.
 - Mr. Pouliot: The mitigation for the tree at 28 Summer St was three trees.
- Ms. Haskell: This tree is not replaceable. <Discussion of tree age, reiteration of numerous benefits it provides.> BARC would support seeking a variance.
- <Discussion regarding possible avenues for Mr. Joshi, State Law 87.>
- Closing remarks.

Mr. Pouliot leaves the meeting, 7:54pm

DPW Report & Updates

1. **Tree Master Plan, FY 2024 \$150k. DPW will seek grant money from Municipal Vulnerability Program.**
 - Mr. Manugian: The 150k will be split roughly in thirds, with 1/3 each for tree replacement, tree removal, and tree master plan.
 - Ms. Edwards: What's the forecast for tree removals under the Complete Streets rollout? Will all the trees along all those roads be removed?

- Mr. Manugian: No, complete streets goals will take 10-20 years, will not impact all roads equally.
- Ms. Edwards: I had in mind the dramatic impacts at North Rd?
- Ms. Haskell: Forecast for FY23?
- Mr. Manugian: Fiscal Year 2023 is the North Rd project. Proposed for 2024, small amount, focusing on no new sidewalk, but accessibility and accessible connection from playground to parking lot.
- Ms. Haskell: Where does CS (complete streets) moola come from?
- Mr. Manugian: CS funds are proposed and funded through capital program.
- Ms. Haskell: How flexible are these plans? Do not want to see another big tree like at Renzo's fall.
- Mr. Manugian: When there is a master plan, we'd work with those plans.

2. Cemetery Expansion Project

- Mr. Manugian: We are currently talking about doing infill of existing cemetery, before looking at expansion. That will minimize tree impacts and we can use the space more efficiently. BARC will be consulted if there are any tree impacts.
- Ms. Haskell: Who manages the cemetery?
- Mr. Manugian: Under the purview of the Select Board, but Mr. Pouliot manages.

3. Culvert Replacement over Summer Street

- Mr. Manugian: the culvert at Summer St is starting to fail. No conceptual plans yet. The tree impacts are not clear.
- <Discussion of invasive species in the area of this culvert.>

4. Great Road Master Plan

- Mr. Manugian: There was another planning document from 10 years ago, related to multiple transportation layers. Willson Park end may start getting going earlier.
 - Ms. Edwards: Is the option—floated in the past—to get rid of Willson Park in favor of a rotary still on the table?
 - Mr. Manugian: Not likely. This was not a popular option!

5. Tree Mitigation Fund

- Mr. Manugian: Funds are set aside, we do not have any projected uses for the funds at the moment.
 - Ms. Haskell: Any movement on the Lane School walking path?
 - Mr. Manugian: No, this project is on hold for now.
 - Ms. Edwards: When does a project sunset?
 - Mr. Manugian: That is a very good point, very good question. We may want to revisit that point.
 - Mr. Churella: There is some confusion regarding tree planting. It's my understanding that there are no tree planting projects on the docket for 2023.
 - Mr. Manugian: That is correct. Aside from the replacement of ash trees in the town center, there are no other tree planting projects.
 - <Discussion of police station addition and landscape redesign project.>

- Mr. Manugian: The police station is already planned out comprehensive of landscaping, but I will supply Ms. Knox with plans, as there are two ailing ash trees south of Police station, which are not included in the project. These will need to be replaced.

6. Carlisle Road Development Project

- Ms. Haskell: I will send dossier from MOF on this project.
- Mr. Churella: Ms. Tornheim and I attended the developer's presentation. We thought it was a good project and that the developer was being careful to include BARC, which is appreciated.
- Ms. Haskell: I need to express a bit of skepticism. This is the guy who did The Edge. We might get him to leave patches of woodland, but there's still going to be a lot of cutting.
- <Discussion regarding development NW of Willson Park intersection and impacts on traffic. *Carlisle Rd development would have an impact on the amount of traffic in all of Bedford, with the most significant impacts North and West of the Willson Park intersection. The traffic impacts, long term, will lead to wider roads, larger sidewalks, the need for a redesign of traffic patterns at Willson Park, all of which will lead to trees being removed, unless we take action. All BARC members agreed that this is a crucial issue which needs following throughout the course of the planned Carlisle Rd development, and in future. We need to raise awareness about the impacts on trees.*>
- Mr. Manugian: We have no power here. It's private land.
- Ms. Edwards: There is nothing you can say that will have an impact on the developer's plans?
- Mr. Manugian: Exactly.

7. Hangar Development Plans

- Mr. Manugian: The planned changes will connect to Hartwell Rd. Town will have limited jurisdiction because its mostly state land. Ms. Edinger may see something through conservation.
- Ms. Haskell: Massport pulled down a lot of trees in town forest, possible that that might happen again because of sightlines needed.
- Edinger: They do periodically need to prune and residents were very upset. Need to plant and restore. Example at Middlesex Community College of deer protection fence. Large scale project. I'm happy about the outcome thus far. This is an ongoing project, I can provide updates.
- <Discussion of poor pruning by Eversource, Massport. Contractors doing pruning are not meeting best pruning practices and there seems to be limited oversight. Can we ask them to replace trees when the pruning is so severe that it compromises the near-term health of the trees? Ms. Haskell asked that we postpone this issue pending more consideration, as there are more pressing issues. We need to do some research before we pursue remediation by Eversource.>

Mr. Manugian Leaves Meeting at 8:37pm

Town Tree Policy Update

- Ms. Haskell: Can the revised Tree Policy provide a bridge from Zoning Dept to Tree Warden. Currently, a developer can come along with little notice and take down trees.
- Mr. Churella: If we really want to influence what a developer can do, you need a tree bylaw. There is no appetite for a tree bylaw currently. With a tree bylaw there are stringent rules.
- <Discussion of limitations and benefits of Tree Policy versus Tree Bylaw.>
- <Discussion of private versus public property, methods for making developers aware of protected status of town trees, wetlands, eg. Language in permit, building inspector.>
- Mr. Churella: I have been working on presentation to SB. Will prepare for next meeting. Are we still aiming to present tree policy changes to SB in April?
- Ms. Haskell: I think that presenting on tree policy in April is too big a lift. Perhaps broad outlines. I talked to tree committee member in Lexington, learned history. They already had a broad-based, well-organized, and robust support base. That has been key to their success.
- Ms. Edinger: I want to write an article for The Bedford Citizen about Fletcher Ave. Trees have come down and it's too hot and unattractive.
- <Discussion regarding Bedford Friends of Trees. Website has been registered. Facebook page needs to be filled in, expanded. Ms. Knox: Content of blog and Facebook page need to be positive in order to garner support for Tree Policy changes. Discussion of what kind of content we want to supply for FB page versus blog/website.>
- Ms. Haskell: What are our goals for April? Can we take a staggered approach and prioritize goals for April versus down the road?
- <Discussion regarding timing of presenting for tree policy, Select Board readiness to take this on now. Mr. Churella feels strongly that now is the time for Tree Policy action.>
- **Decision to hold interim meeting to discuss tree policy exclusively, in early March.**

Arbor Day

- Proclamation: town manager signed. <Discussion of Proclamation and rules for qualifying for Tree City by Arbor Day Foundation.>
- Ms. Haskell: I'm not going to have any luck on the posters by 5th graders.
- Ms. Tornheim: Display at Library is not going to happen, they have changed their policy about outside groups displaying at the Library. <Discussion of rule changes, other places to display Ms. Tornheim's invasive species project.>
- Ms. Tornheim: Can we reach out to Girl Scouts?
- <Discussion regarding Girl Scouts, Arbor Day.>
- Ms. Haskell: Traction from Ms. Knox regarding tree planting? Not yet. Action item to email Mr. Manugian regarding tree planting.
- Ms. Knox: I'd like to put forward a project to highlight native trees in Bedford, via social media, rather than a town tree walk. Need photos.

Action Items:

1. Mr. Manugian to send Ms. Knox plans of Police Station, comprehensive of ash trees at South side of property, to be replaced. Ms. Knox to provide recommendations for replacement trees. *BARC will develop tree planting plans*

for the Town Center area, comprehensive of the parking lot islands, the Playground, and the south lawn of Police Station.

2. [*Carry over from November meeting*] Ms. Knox to provide recommendations for trees to replace ash trees removed at Town Center parking lot.
3. [*Carry over from January meeting*] Ms. Knox to follow up with Mr. Manugian regarding tree planting for Arbor Day.
4. Unknown BARC member???: Reach out to Girl Scouts regarding Arbor Day activity.
5. Ms. Edinger to write article on Fletcher Ave tree removals for The Bedford Citizen.
6. Ms. Haskell, Ms. Knox: Continue moving forward with website and Facebook page for Bedford Friends of Trees.
 - Ms. Knox: Communicate with Bedford Bees, Blooms, Butterflies, and Birds about cross-promotion.
 - Ms. Knox: Prepare mission statement for review/input by BARC members, for Bedford Friends of Trees Facebook page.
 - Ms. Knox: After mission statement is finalized, post in Bedford Bees, etc. group about town tree photos, competition.
7. All BARC members: Go to Tree Policy Draft, read and provide input.

Minutes

Meeting minutes from 01/26/23 were reviewed and unanimously approved

Next Meeting – March 23 2023 – virtual

Meeting Adjourned at 9:42pm

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

Meeting minutes of 01/26/23

Upcoming meetings – Meetings are usually scheduled for the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30PM. Due to the COVID19 restrictions, meetings have been remote, with no in-person attendance. Meetings are scheduled for 03/23, 04/20 (tentative).

Prepared and submitted by Elizabeth G. Knox