

**BEDFORD ARBOR RESOURCES COMMITTEE
REMOTE MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:30PM

1. **7:34pm—Call to order, required notices, attendance:** Molly Haskell, Chair; Daniel Churella, Jacqueline Edwards; Deb Edinger; Bobbi Tornheim; Elizabeth Knox; Nick Pouliot, Tree Warden/DPW, David Manugian, DPW, Jeanette Rebecchi, DPW, Bopha Malone, Select Board NOT PRESENT. Meeting was held on ZOOM and recorded by the Town.
2. Public Comment – 10 minutes
3. DPW Communication & project updates.
 - a. **Eversource program presentation by Matthew Mitchell**
 - **22 miles** of lines in Bedford planned for pruning
 - Bedford is at **22% tree related outages**, considered on the high side, will be doing a **fairly aggressive pruning to clear branches from wires on 6 miles of road**, 15' to the side, 25' above wires. Will be removing hazard trees, diseased trees, some healthy trees if they impact wires.
 - Edwards: Has spoken with 2 Eversource arborists regarding a tagged tree on her property, made clear that it was a tree on her private property, that she said it was healthy and she didn't want it cut, was told that the tree was okay and wouldn't be cut, but then received a new notice.
 - Mitchell: Not everyone who receives a notice will have their tree pruned.
 - Edwards: I tried calling again this last time, but the operator could not identify the correct connection.
 - Mitchell: We have permission from the town to prune around our wires within the road layout. Even trees on private property, any part of the tree that crosses into the road layout we have permission to prune up to that line. As well, legally, if there is a tree planted on private property that in my opinion is a short term hazard, we do not need permission trim. I don't like strong arming people involved, I will always try to schedule a meeting.
 - [Discussion, regarding Edwards property tree]
 - Edwards: We've had trouble on our street with trees coming down during storms, but we've also had trees fall down in clear weather in areas where leaking natural gas had been identified. I'd be grateful if the town was as aggressive about leaking natural gas as Eversource is about branches overhanging.
 - Churella: When will this work be done?
 - Mitchell: For the yearly pruning, basically any day, as soon as the contractor is ready to go. Before the end of the year.
 - Churella: The special trimming will all be done at the same time?

- Mitchell: No, I need to work with Nick, I have a list of tree removals, review the full list of trees, determine hazards/not hazards... for removals we will have a longer process. May go into 2024.
- Churella: You send someone out and survey which trees need to be pruned, which removed... is that automatic, or do you need to review that with the Tree Warden?
- Mitchell: I don't have specific permission for the extended pruning yet, but for the regular pruning, every year usually January or February I'll send them an email with the list of streets where we're going to be pruning.
- Pouliot: I had forwarded you guys a list that Matthew had sent in that time period.
- Churella: There was a situation a number of years ago when many trees on Page Rd were taken down and people were taken by surprise. We would like to have the list ahead of time so we may review and present alternatives to removals.
- Churella: Would like a full list of areas **where cutting will be performed** in the next year.
- Mitchell (Eversource): I have worked with similar groups in other towns, tree advocacy groups, I am very happy to do tree walks.
- Haskell: You're willing to provide that kind of notice and make yourself available for tree walks? And for this year's removals?
- Edwards: Twice in the past, when Eversource was pruning and flagging trees for removal on Page Rd, there were a small number of private trees marked erroneously. BARC got back to you folks, and Eversource confirmed that the wrong trees were flagged. It was good work on both sides. The cooperative model worked better for everyone.
- Mitchell: Sometimes mistakes happen, we try not to have it happen. Reviewing the work carefully before it goes to contractors is something that I'm involved with.
- Haskell: Okay but I wanted to get an answer from you regarding tree removals. You said you'd be willing to give us notice about pruning but what about tree removals, same?
- Mitchell: Anything I'm doing with the town trees, I'm happy to be working with Nick on that.
- Haskell: Is your concern about not sharing private tree removal with us, is that Eversource's policy? Because Jaci just illustrated a point where it was fruitful for everybody to identify an error, and I'm not trying to cast aspersions, we're all human here, I'm talking about things that can't account for themselves. So I'm trying to understand why you would be hesitant to provide a list of private tree removal as well.
- Mitchell: I don't really have a list of private trees taken down in Bedford, it's a completely different process.
- [Confirmation from Pouliot, Manugian, Mitchell to communicate R.E. tree removals list and setting up a tree walk.]
- [Discussion of Eversource pruning projects and communication with BARC, Mitchell

willing to do tree walks ahead of time. For private removals, the tree is usually critically damaged or dead, or threat to public safety]

b. Shawsheen Cemetery Expansion Project:

<https://bedfordma.gov/854/Shawsheen-Cemetery-Expansion>

- **Jeanette Rebecchi presentation**
- **Dan Churella review of survey and tree locations, proposed removals**
- [Discussion by Rebecchi, Churella, Manugian, regarding **inaccuracy of survey**, feedback for surveyor, utility of this exercise as a test case and learning experience.]
- [Continuation of **DC review, identifying potential trees to save**. Agreement from JR that there are trees along perimeter that might be saved.]
- Churella: Could we preserve trees along centerline between grave sites? NP and JR: No, not feasible because of necessary depth clearance, and that centerline is only 2' wide. EK notes that because of inaccuracy of survey, those trees are not going to be on that centerline in any case.
- [Discussion by Rebecchi, Churella, Manugian, Edwards, of trees along project perimeter, specific trees that might be preserved.]
- Churella: BARC recommends as much tree planting as possible. This project drives home the **need for a revised Tree Policy. The mitigation proposed is not adequate**, neither the tree planting nor the financial recompense. [Discussion of need for revised Tree Policy.]
- Pouliot: Need for that **clearance from the fence** for maintenance and preventing incursion of weeds.
- Manugian: Ask that BARC state that this project meets the current tree policy, and that effort will be made to preserve trees between the back fence and project limit.
- [Discussion regarding this request for BARC statement by DPW.]
- VOTE: BARC agrees that this project meets the current tree policy, **chair abstains from voting**. BARC agrees that DPW will make effort to preserve trees between the back fence and project work zone limit.

(Jeanette Rebecchi leaves meeting)

c. Discussion of Tree Master Plan Select Board charge

- **David Manugian presents plan for Ad Hoc Tree Master Plan Advisory Committee.**
- Edwards: Concern regarding **balance of proposed committee**.
- Manugian: A committee with a **wide range of perspectives** builds a better document. Better suited for **building support from community** if people see that **diverse perspectives** have been considered.
- Edwards: Based on history in town meeting, etc. **BARC has the trust of the community**.
- Manugian: If multiple members of BARC wanted to apply, their applications would

- be considered.
- Churella: I have been in conversation with **Davey Tree**, who has experience across the country crafting tree master plans. They would also want to gather feedback from the public. (reads stated purpose from doc) I think the stated purpose is much bigger than that...
 - Edwards: What about preservation of **tree canopy**?
 - Churella: Preserving what we have, educating the public, planning for planting new trees, (**tree inventory is part of knowing what we have**) **database of priority areas for tree planting**. A critical part of the Tree Master Plan is planning... insect response plan... I prepared an outline in 10/22 which I'd like to see reconsidered.
 - Manugian: Explains reasoning, asks DC questions about what he'd like to see changed or added.
 - Churella: I see much of this Tree Master Plan as being **DONE** by the committee, working in concert with consultants.
 - Manugian: Technical work is in the realm of the professionals, the consultants. **The committee needs to be the ones on the political side, winning support for the Master Plan** and deciding what needs to be encompassed by said plan. Suggests edits ("regularly meet...") [agreement from BARC members] Once a committee is appointed, how do we win the public over? That's part of the committee's charge.
 - Churella: Agree that's a big part of what Davey Tree recommends.
 - [Discussion on how to approach political consensus building]
 - Haskell: I want to see **this committee broader, to help build consensus**, include more POV.
 - Churella: If you have a working committee to get stuff done, 7 is an ideal number... more it gets bogged down.
 - Haskell: Yes, but out of the 7, only 4 might show up... more people is better.
 - Manugian: I hear what you are saying Molly, wanted to include groups that have a clear authority.
 - Haskell: Include Zoning? I'd like to see ESC, Housing?
 - Churella: That's where the equity discussion comes in.
 - Manugian: As a permanent change, I'll make these **edits**... regularly meet rather than periodically, I'll note that BARC would like to see certain other committees included, ESC, Housing, etc.
 - Churella: **Need tree inventory. You can't preserve what you have unless you know what you have.**
 - Manugian: Let's **add inventory existing trees**, identify key characteristics of Bedford's tree canopy.
 - Edwards: **Maintenance?**
 - Haskell: Promote, we're not going to be able to preserve everything. (Mentions projects we can look to for inspiration and example)

- Churella: That's the whole point of having a master plan... preserving trees on equal footing with roads, equity initiatives...
- Manugian: Suggests edits. [Discussion of said edits.]
- Churella: Technology can be very useful for overall canopy, but need information on individual trees, which will be provided by the professional inventory.
- Edwards: Suggests language: **promoting a healthy tree canopy?**
- Manugian: Suggests edits. [Discussion of edits.]

d. Purchase from tree mitigation revolving fund and fund balance

- DM: Tree Mitigation Funds Memo. Nick (Pouliot) has **found a watering truck** in Arizona. [General celebration.] We are going to use tree mitigation funds for this purchase.
- Tornheim: Neighboring towns might be **willing to rent the use of the truck** from us.
- Haskell: Will maintenance for truck come out of tree fund?
- Manugian: No, it will not.
- Edwards: **Lane School walking path tree removals?**
- Manugian: Not successful in raising funds, too expensive. Grants pursued, but did not come to fruition.
- Haskell: Need to propose **a sunset limit** for projects
- Churella: I have a concern with spending half our tree mitigation fund on a watering truck. Could get funds from DCR? Will need funds to plant trees.
- [Discussion of ways to get alternative funding.]
- [Discussion of suitability of proposed watering truck and capacity of truck.]
- Show of hands for those in favor of watering truck purchase (majority raises hands)
- Discussion of Almost Free Tree program, **Ashby Place—trees going in soon**, credit to Nick.

(Nick Pouliot leaves meeting at 9:50pm)

4. Bylaw - Article 64 – Tree Protection and Preservation

<https://www.bedfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2967/SB-Meeting-Materials-91123>

- Churella: I am very concerned about communication about Bylaw and miscommunication. Citizen, social media, about what this bylaw actually IS.
- Tornheim: Sandwich board across from Chipotle?
- Churella: I have everything that we need for sandwich boards.
- Haskell: I'd like propose another meeting. We have a lot to get done but we can get it done. We need to draft a statement.
- Tornheim: What one sentence could we put out? **Tree Alert! Support Article 64 and Vote to Preserve Our Mature Trees**

- Edwards: It's article 11!
- Discussion on meeting time, **10/24 set for additional meeting.**
- Nov meeting date is a typo, should be **11/16.**

Vote to adjourn at 10:07pm