



Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes

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As required by G.L. c. 30 A, §18-25

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**TOWN OF CHELMSFORD
PATRICIA E. DZURIS
TOWN CLERK**

DATE: January 14, 2025

TIME: 4:30 PM

PLACE: Town Hall

ADDRESS: 50 Billerica Rd, Chelmsford ROOM: 206

Note taker: Robert Koethe

Attendees: Christine Clancy, Peter Spawn, Ian Farley, John Thompson, Kevin Powers,
Robert Koethe

1. **Community input – None**
2. **Notes from December Meeting - reviewed and accepted with one spelling correction**
3. **Tree Warden Comments: Project updates and Discussion of Ongoing Initiatives**

Discussion of trees recommended for various programs

The tree lists developed at the December meeting were discussed and the selections confirmed for use going forward. The lists will be used to promote the front yard and memorial tree programs. Trees lists include: two growth types:

Small trees for under powerlines

Dogwood- Floridian
Eastern Redbud
American Hophornbeam
Hawthorn - winter king
Crab apple- spring snow
Serviceberry

Larger trees for open areas

White oak
Tupelo- black gum
Sugar maple
Tulip tree
Sycamore
Linden- silver

Additional trees that could be considered for other town locations

Horse chestnut
Kentucky coffee tree
River and black birch
London plane tree
Shag bark hickory

Front yard tree program

This program is funded at \$50,000 - \$60,000 through a Massachusetts state grant. Program and planting criteria for front yard tree program applications were reviewed. The Tree Warden reported that 50 to 60 inquiries about the program have already been received. The program will likely get sufficient requests for the free trees scheduled next week when it goes live on Monday January 19.

After receipt and review of applications, approvals will be made in the order of receipt of applications that meet the criteria. Approved tree locations must include a 30-foot clearance in all directions around the base, and be located within 20 feet of the road. Trees will be planted and mulched by DPW. After planting, tree care, including watering, will be the responsibility of the homeowner recipients.

Memorial tree program- implementation

- The program was announced on November 1st. The town's distribution methods including social media and the town manager newsletter were utilized. One inquiry has been received to date. Requests will be reviewed when they are received. DPW follow-up and planting will occur when newly planted trees have a high likelihood of survival.
- Update from Kevin Powers: Kevin found a new plaque to use for the trees. The new plaque is larger, engraved and on a post to allow better visibility.

2025 planting program- status

Most watering bags from the 2025 trees have been removed. Watering the 2025 trees in 2026 will be conducted by senior volunteers and is expected to begin in the spring, most likely in May. The Tree Warden is considering hiring a third person to help water. Other duties, such as monitoring trees planted for the front yard tree program may be added to the list of senior volunteer responsibilities.

Tree Hearings

Three tree hearings are planned. Hearings include one for a tree on School Street and two related to requests from National Grid.

Tree Committee Website

The Tree Warden is contacting the town clerk's office to request website access for editing and updating to Ian Farley of the Tree Committee. The Tree Warden stated that DPW will commit staff time to assist with the updates and revisions.

4. Communication Plan

Committee Chair, discussed the importance of strong communications on trees and committee activities. He proposed: 1) creating 4 articles per year to be included in Chelmsford communications to residents; 2) develop mailing supplements for inclusion in townwide mailings; 3) TV presence; 4) Facebook input.

The idea of creating a formal communication plan was discussed. Suggestions included: 1) creating a calendar and/or spreadsheet highlighting relevant events sponsored by Chelmsford and adjacent towns; 2) strengthen EOY accomplishment report; and 3) invite town representatives and other Chelmsford residents to monthly committee meetings. Discussions of this topic will continue at future meetings.

5. Tree and Invasive Management - Project funding approved at Town Meeting

- Money *has been allocated*.
- Funding will be used to hire a consultant to conduct an assessment. The focus will be on invasive plants that directly impact native and other desirable trees.
- Peter alerted the tree committee about a sponsored webinar on invasive plants scheduled for January 21, 2026.

6. Other topics and updates

- Maintain a list of tasks to recommend to volunteers looking for projects. Possible examples include: 1) labeling trees planted in 2025 and; 2) clearing areas identified as needing invasive plants removed.
- Improve understanding of ConCom activities by committee members. Consult and coordinate on those ConCom projects that impact and benefit trees (e.g., expanding invasive plant management pilot underway at Warren-Pohl, tree inventories, and support ConCom community outreach). Discuss 42 Billerica Rd development proposal.
- Rights-of-Way (ROW) issues are of interest to many town residents. The Tree Committee could devote time to improve our understanding of the Massachusetts ROW program and ways to improve collaboration with the industry to better address resident needs and concerns as related to trees and herbaceous vegetation control and management in and near ROW corridors.

7. Next meeting date and additional agenda items

Next Meeting: February 11, 2026 at 4:00 pm. 9 Alpha Road (new time and location)