

**TOWN OF ORONO
TREE BOARD VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021 AT 5:00PM**

WATCH ONLINE AT

<https://zoom.us/j/97387738081>

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*Comments can be submitted via email prior to the meeting start time
at info@orono.org and during the meeting by using Zoom comment features.*

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Cindy Blease (Co-Chair), Dave Thompson (Co-Chair), Pat Thompson, Jessica Leahy, Matthew Ewing, Tim White and Public Works Director/Tree Warden Rob Yerxa.

2. Agenda Review - None

3. Approval of Minutes of September 18th, 2020

Motion made by Pat Thompson and seconded by Jessica Leahy. All voted in favor, 6-0.

4. Tree evaluations:

- **20 Crosby Street, Cottonwood Tree**

The Tree Board members discussed the condition of the cottonwood tree. They noted bark on the ground; a good size limb on the ground over the summer, the leaves showing stress from the drought and the tree could cause problems with power lines. Mr. Yerxa noted the last few trees taken down have had a lot of center rot. Ms. Leahy asked about the owner's preference and Mr. Yerxa said they would prefer to have it taken down. The Tree Board's consensus was to take the tree down.

Motion by Tim White and seconded by Cindy Blease to take down the cottonwood tree. All voted in favor, 6-0.

- **Forest Hill Terrace**

Mr. Yerxa stated he received a request from a resident that is concerned about the trees and noted that a limb fell while she was out for a walk. Mr. Yerxa noted the trees have been trimmed by utility workers over the years causing imbalance, and now could use some more trimming. The Tree Board visited the trees and agreed they should be trimmed. Ms. Blease expressed concern about trees at the beginning of the street uprooting and falling on the house across the street.

Motion by Tim White and seconded by Jessica Leahy to prune the oak trees to even them out. And further, to place them on a formal watch list to monitor the trees annually. All voted in favor, 6-0.

5. Regular Board Meeting Schedule

The Tree Board agreed to meet monthly on the first Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 3rd at 5 p.m.

6. Review of Tree Board Communication

Mr. Yerxa asked for feedback from the Tree Board on the process of formally evaluating the trees to address issues. The Board stated they were comfortable with the process that was used. They received the notice of what trees to look at, had time to react and made notes on any issues, Mr. Ewing commented the only issue would be time if they had 10-15 trees to evaluate, Mr. Yerxa noted they evaluate 15 to 20 trees per year. He noted the trees the Board evaluates are generally on the verge of a hazard. He commented that he calls the Tree Board Chair if there is an immediate need to remove a tree. Mr. White suggested agreeing on tree removals by consent. There were no other concerns on the process.

7. Review and Recommended Revisions of the Vegetation Ordinance

Mr. Yerxa asked the Tree Board if they would like to review the Town Ordinance, Chapter 38 Vegetation Ordinance to make recommendations for changes. He noted it has not been reviewed in many years. He commented that Council is responsible for making the changes through review, public hearing and adoption. The Tree Board agreed to review the Vegetation Ordinance. Mr. Yerxa will set up a Google document and the Board can start discussing the ordinance at the February meeting.

8. Tree Inventory and Master Plan Updates

Mr. Yerxa stated that the tree inventory is significantly outdated. He suggested getting a consultant onboard to help us to do the work and to pursue a grant to help pay for it. He noted it is a bigger project than we want to take on ourselves. Ms. Leahy commented that UMaine Forestry students may be interested in doing the inventory as a senior capstone project. Mr. Yerxa noted that Dave Baxter and Kathy Carter did the existing master plan and they are now retired. Mr. Yerxa said he will follow up with Ms. Carter to see if she is interested in the project. Mr. Yerxa will also look into grant opportunities.

9. Emerald Ash Borer Project Update

Ms. Leahy reported that she has asked the students to provide the Board with an update. She noted that Sidney is a graduate student and went through all of the Orono streets and has identified 120 ash trees, mapped them using GPS, and made an assessment. After she returned the equipment, she found three more ash trees. She is matching those up against the prior inventory. She is preparing EAB plans and using other towns' data to see what she needs. She noted that UMaine is talking about EAB as well. Ashley, a senior undergraduate, will use data they collected to do online mapping of all these trees. They are both actively engaged in helping

the Town of Orono with the Emerald Ash project (Capstone projects for them). The Board expresses appreciation for their assistance.

10. Open Board Positions

Mr. Yerxa stated there is a Tree Board position available. He will put the opening on the Town's website to recruit unless the Board has someone to recommend. The Board would like to interview candidates and make a recommendation to Council for April.

Ms. Thompson reported that the Arbor Day application was mailed in and the information was accepted. She is awaiting news on being an official Tree City again this year. Mr. Yerxa will add a standing item on the agenda for Tree Board updates.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Tim White and seconded by Jessica Leahy. All voted in favor, 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Minutes are summary only. A video recording of the meeting is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org under Agendas and Minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant