

**TOWN OF ORONO
TREE BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2022 AT 5:00PM**

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MINUTES

1. Roll Call & Introductions

Present: Cindy Blease (Co-Chair), Dave Thompson (Co-Chair), Pat Thompson, Jennifer Dann, Tim White, Jessica Leahy, Associate members Jason Clarke, Kenny Fergusson, Public Works Director/Tree Warden Rob Yerxa and Environmental Services Coordinator Megan Hess.

Absent: Terri Triandafillou.

2. Agenda Review - None

3. Approval of Minutes of December 7, 2021 Board Meeting

Motion by Tim White and seconded by Jennifer Dann. All voted in favor, 7-0.

4. Tree Warden Update & Tree Evaluations:

- **Orono Land Trust Pear Tree**

It was noted that a potential state record pear tree on Orono Land Trust land, off Penobscot Street, has been located. The Board is waiting for a review from the Maine Forest Service.

- **Webster Park Pruning Project**

It was noted there are a number of trees within Webster Park that need maintenance, but accessing them is a challenge because of unstable spring soil and during the summer it is busy with people. This year, Public Works is hiring a contractor to clean up dead and broken limbs, not removing whole trees. Staff is hoping to accomplish this in March. All voted in favor, 7-0.

- **Bennoch Road Roadside Clearing Project - *See attached sketch***

Mr. Yerxa explained that there are dead standing and fallen trees that need to be cleaned up within this area (map below) and it is a priority to prune up large limbs on the street wires (e.g. Telecommunication, Consolidated Communications line, fiber line). Mr. Yerxa said the first step will be to have Public Works staff clean up lower/fallen trees and then have Zuhlke Tree Services come trim aerial limbs and higher/larger branches. They plan on leaving any large trees that are healthy and above the wires because they stabilize the bank and Bennoch Road. The Tree Board members eventually wish to see the lines and poles be moved completely to the west side of the road. Mr. Thompson asked if the owners of the poles and lines will aid in the cost of tree clean up and limb pruning. Mr. Yerxa explained that only power line companies are

required to do maintenance work and we would like to start the project soon to eliminate any potential hazards. Staff will attempt to do this project at the end of March, before spring thaw.

Once cleaned up, Jennifer Dann suggested possible tree plantings on the bank to promote erosion control for an arbor day project.

- **Project Canopy Grant Process & Application**

Rob Yerxa explained that Megan Hess will be helping the Tree Board complete the Project Canopy Grant to fund a graduate student to complete a new tree inventory for the Town of Orono. Jessica Leahy has a potential graduate student and will provide a budget for that student. Jennifer Dann volunteered to help Megan with the grant application.

- **Cemetery Tree Evaluations**

The tree inventory in the cemetery lot should be updated. Megan Hess will build the GIS collector template for the Tree Board members to use to evaluate the trees in the cemetery. This gives the Tree Board members a chance to pilot the tree inventory collector that will be used for the new tree inventory collection to happen this year.

- **Godfrey Drive Buffer Strip Project Update**

Rob Yerxa updated the Tree Board members that the Public Works crew cleaned up a lot of the underbrush and dead debris within the Godfrey Drive buffer strip. Mr. Thompson said they are now in the position to plant trees in the area that will yield a diverse forest in the future. Mr. Yerxa suggested that the Town may want to maintain the trail that goes through the middle.

5. Browntail Moth Month Activities - Feb 2022

- **Education and Outreach - Web identification and removal activity?**

The Tree Board members discussed the potential of conducting a Brown Tail Moth (BTM) nest trimming event as an educational and outreach event. Kenny Fergusson mentioned that Megan Schnieder, who is with RSU #26, is planning a trimming event and we could partner with her on. Ms. Leahy asked what equipment would be needed for a public event. Kenny replied that the state may be able to provide tools like pole pruners. Mr. Yerxa suggested reaching out to the school to do an education and outreach event where participants go out to collect data for the survey.

- **Citizen Reporting - new webpage and GIS based heat map**

Megan Hess gave the Tree Board members a walk through of the new Browntail Moth Monitoring website which can be accessed by visiting www.orono.org.

- **Mitigation**

Once the Town learns more about the infestation rate using the data collected on the survey, the Tree Board would like to prioritize public park areas for trimming nests and mitigation events.

6. Planning for the Management Plan & Inventory Update

The Tree Board plans to apply for the Project Canopy Grant that would fund the collection of a new tree inventory. The new data will be used to create a new management plan.

7. Monthly Tree Board Activity Update

- **Chairperson Update**

Ms. Blease reminded the Tree Board that Pat and Dave Thompson completed the report for the Arbor Day Foundation back in December. She also noted that she completed the Tree Board report for the Town Annual Report.

The Tree Board started brainstorming some ideas or events to do for Arbor Day. They noted that the Orono school Arbor Day event may need to be virtual this year.

8. Adjournment

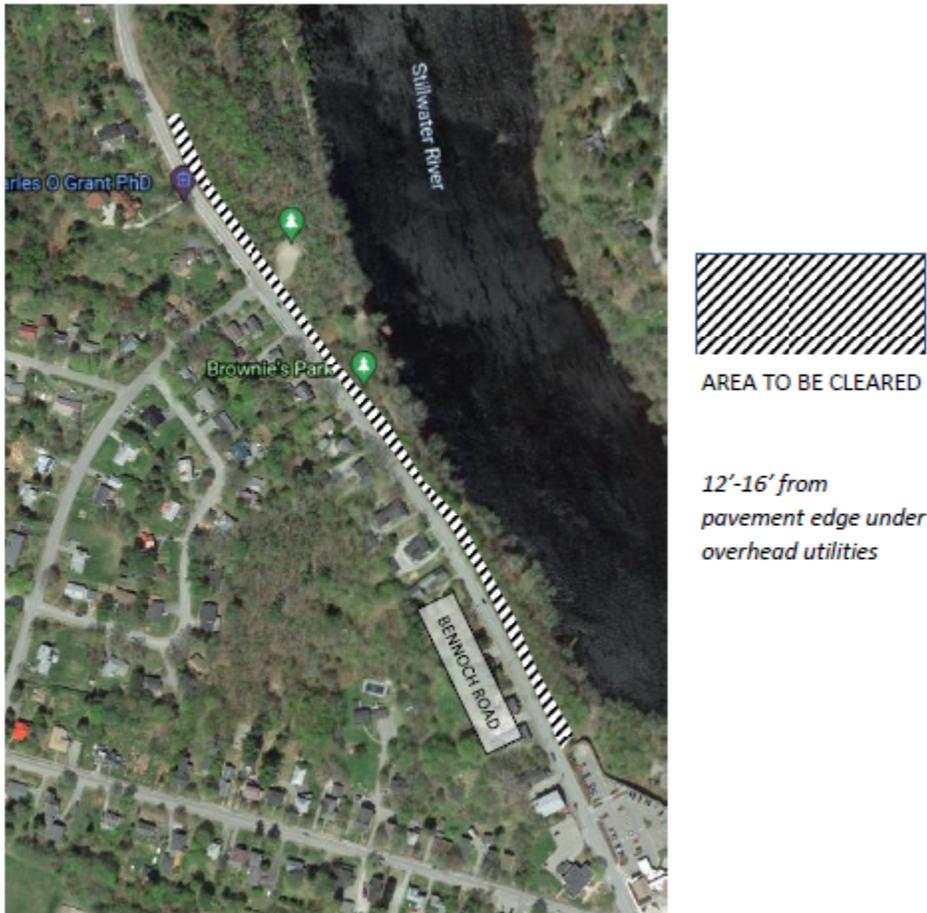
At 6:00pm, Tim White motioned and Cindy Blease seconded to adjourn. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Minutes are summary. No recording was made.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Ward
Executive Assistant

Bennoch Road Roadside Clearing Project - The scope includes clearing dead wood and hazard trees from the roadside that are growing under and into the communication lines and hanging out over the road. All of the work will be done on the river side of the road. Larger healthy trees will not be removed, but may be pruned to mitigate utility conflicts. Healthy vegetation on the embankment will be left to ensure continued stability of the slope.



This project will be completed in two phases. First, Public Works staff will remove and chip anything that can be reached safely from the ground. This will include much of the deadwood that has fallen or broken off and smaller brush that is within the 12'-16' clearing area under the wires. Next, a contractor will finish the work, removing and pruning trees that require an aerial lift.

There may be some time between the first and second phases depending on the weather and work schedules for both Public Works and the Tree Service. All of the work is anticipated to be completed by mid April.