

Tree committee will take stock of island trees

By Robert Morton-Ranney

At its Feb. 20 meeting, the Jamestown Tree Preservation and Protection Committee again agreed on the importance of taking a new and complete inventory of trees on public property.

Committee member Edwina Cloherty summarized the benefits of an inventory. First, it would provide an accurate assessment of the replacement value of these trees in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster.

Second, it would create a knowledge base for the writing of future grant proposals. And, third, it is an excellent way to provide education to the residents of Jamestown about the trees they enjoy.

Tree Warden David Nickerson showed examples of the latest inventory done in North Kingstown, and described various computer software offerings to help with the task.

Cloherty added that two Jamestown school students are ready to perform computer data entry from field sheets. Committee member Anthony Antine also expressed enthusiasm for a GPS mapping of all locations of public trees.

Committee guest and former chairman Frank Andres expressed concern about trees planted in a public location at a building site on Clinton Avenue. Andres said also that he is, "not sure" the Planning Commission is addressing the issue of the long-term health of trees in their process.

Nickerson said the trees are planted too deep and probably will not thrive, and that the permit stipulations were not followed by the landscaper. In any case, they should not affect water and sewer lines because they are shallow rooted.

Planning Commission liaison Michael White said he would mention the issue in his tree committee report at the commission's next meeting.

The committee agreed, and feels the owner in this instance does as well, that the trees should be planted properly, though there was a consensus that it was not likely that a certificate of occupancy would be held up for trees.

The importance of getting planting specifications and proper planting guidelines into the hands of builders and their subcontractors

was discussed. Nickerson pointed out that, except for operations in coastal zones and by waterways feeding into them, landscapers do not require a license.

A tree permit has been taken out by a property owner on Catamaran Street who is taking down two trees but planting four.

Nickerson reported that a tree root that was damaged during construction at the Town Hall site should survive if treated properly. He said "it's an oak that is probably 100-years-old."

The committee would like to plant some trees at Fort Getty using the \$500 presented to them by state Representative Bruce Long, but said there would have to be a watering plan in place. In answer to a question from committee member Jim Rugh, he said they would not be affected by the Fort Getty Master Plan.

Nickerson would also like to do a demonstration of appropriate tree planting techniques, perhaps at the beginning of April. Rugh offered to help with publicity, and other coordination needs will be discussed at the next meeting. Certificates of Appreciation were signed for Judith DiBello and Matt

Largess for their years of service on the committee.

Chairman Emmet Turley noted that the Tree Committee is in a membership transition. Rugh will distribute copies of the duties and

by-laws previously adopted by the committee.

Cloherty expressed the hope that, as the transition proceeds, particular areas of responsibility will be assigned to individuals and

that pertinent activities and suggestions will go through these persons "so that the left hand will know what the right hand is doing."

Antine suggested that work sessions devoted to particular issues could help focus the attentions of the committee and streamline its efforts.

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