

Selectboard: Andrew Baker, Margaret Payne, Bob Manners, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

Project Representatives: Linda Overing, Breezeway Farm; Mike Carter, CGC Associates

Guests: Laurie Wheeler, Beth Boron, Billy Howe, Dan Butler, Roger Weld, Rosey Tortola, Jan Vorhees, Jacqui Goodman, Mark Shippee, Deb Verhoff, Cathy Taylor, Dan Alden.

The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the trees that will be affected by the Bridge Street Phase 2 construction project. Originally six trees were to be removed and replaced with two additional trees to be added. Now, only five trees will be removed; two of which will be transplanted in another location. The trees were evaluated by consulting arborist David Hawkins.

Tree 1 is located near the Arms Library. The distance between the edge of the tree and a nearby metal railing is 39". To protect the tree and allow for growth, pavement should not come within 12" of the tree. This would leave 27" for the sidewalk. ADA requires sidewalks to be at least 36" wide. An option would be to move the sidewalk away from the tree to the top of the existing retaining wall, but that would require the wall to be rebuilt or a new wall constructed, possibly by using piers to hold the sidewalk. The cost is estimated at \$40,000 to \$50,000. Another option is to create a bump out and walkway on the street side of the tree. This would mean losing two parking spaces. The cost would be about \$6,000. It was suggested that those two parking spaces could be used for motorcycles. It might be possible to use some sort of rubber matting or porous concrete instead of regular concrete closest to the tree. Such materials are considered ADA compliant. Roger Weld thought the entire length of the sidewalk should be made wider. That would impact the parking spaces.

Tree 2 is located in front of Town Hall. It is impacted by the nearby flag pole, hydrant, and handicap ramp. The roots of the tree were damaged when the hydrant was installed. The plan is to remove and replace the tree.

Tree 3 is in front of Baker Pharmacy. Its large roots would be impacted by the replacement of the water line to the building.

Trees 4 and 5 are in front of Greenfield Savings Bank. Tree 4 has been damaged by sun scald and is not healthy. Tree 5 would be removed and replanted elsewhere. Mike Carter said that once the utilities are in place, trees will be planted in areas that won't affect the utilities.

Margaret was impressed at the amount of effort that had gone into trying to find alternatives for tree 1. Bob was not in favor of any of the alternatives for tree 1, feeling that any work around the tree would eventually kill it. Mark Shippee said the trees in question were near the end of their lives. If those trees are removed the town would have an ADA compliant sidewalk and new trees will be planted that are in line with those planted in phase 1 of the project. He was opposed to the bump out option as it makes plowing very difficult. Terry was concerned about the added costs.

The Selectboard has already committed an additional \$178,757 in ARPA funds to cover project costs, as bids came in higher than expected. An additional \$40-50,000 for a tree is significant given that the project hadn't started yet.

Laurie Wheeler liked the idea of installing piers to move the sidewalk closer to the library and away from tree 1. Cathy Taylor thought the sidewalk should be widened all the way from tree 1 to the library steps. There would be added costs to that.

Jan Vorhees said lack of trees has changed the character of the village. She liked the idea of porous materials right next to tree 1. Dan Butler asked about the maintenance of such materials. Mike Carter said it would require annual maintenance. While the tree might be compliant now, as it continues to grow it could once again make the sidewalk too narrow. Deb Verhoff said trees are not insignificant to the character of the village and that people come here for the natural beauty. Roger Weld liked the idea of a bump out and also widening the sidewalk. Cathy Taylor thought there must be different types of tree wells that could be adjusted for tree growth and that would have a flat surface. Mike said such materials are available but the town had made the decision not to use them during Phase 1.

With construction about to start, next week, Mike said the contractors would like to be able to remove the trees right away.

Since little had been heard about trees 2 through 5 a motion was put forth by Bob to authorize the cutting and replacement of trees 2 through 5 as part of Phase 2 of the Bridge Street project. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – aye; Margaret – aye; Andrew – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Moving on to tree 1, Bob said one tree could be holding up a \$700,000 project. He said while removal of the tree might not be aesthetically pleasing, it would have no global impact. There is a limited contingency for this project and it is unknown what problems might be found when the street is dug up. Bob added that as town officials, it was important to look at the overall scope of the project and what is best for the community as a whole. Margaret said the tree might be harmed during construction, the costs to save it are high, and measures to protect the tree might harm accessibility. Andrew said he was not sentimental about trees but felt the town should save as many of the older trees as possible. Tree 1 is not heaving the sidewalk and perhaps it could stay even though the widened sidewalk might come close to it.

A motion was made by Margaret that tree 1 be removed as part of Phase 2 of the Bridge Street project. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – aye; Margaret – aye; Andrew – nay. Motion passed 2-1-0.

At 6:50 a motion was made by Margaret to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – aye; Bob – aye; Andrew – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary