

*Hamden Tree Commission  
Main Floor Conference Room  
Hamden Government Center  
Meeting of  
Tuesday, July 21, 2015  
Minutes  
6:30 P.M.*

Commissioners in Attendance: Susan Sternberg, Mike Montgomery, Tom Parlapiano, Jill Nathanson, Andy Brand

Others in Attendance: Arborist Geoff Harris, Clerk Gerry Tobin

**Call to order**

Mr. Parlapiano called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Approval of minutes of regular meeting of June 16, 2015

Page 1, Item 2 under Old Business, second line, remove "it" after water, remove "it" after fertilize, change tree to trees, change is to are; page 2, item 5, second line, insert Eli before Whitney Park

**Mr. Brand made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2015 meeting as corrected. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

**Old Business**

1. Changes to Tree List

Mr. Montgomery finalized the letter regarding the tree list and sent it to commissioners. This letter will go out under Mr. Parlapiano's name. The last paragraph is optional. The letter will go to Director of Public Works Craig Cesare and Tree Warden Anthony Greene. It will also go to Town Planner Dan Kops for comments. The letter explains why we need new trees added to the existing list. The letter asks the for authorization of the tree warden to approve these trees. Mr. Brand would include the third paragraph. Mr. Montgomery noted that Mr. Greene works well with the public. Ms. Sternberg would like to have the list as a spread sheet so it can be sorted. The mature height and width of each tree, and possibly the shape of the tree should be noted. In addition fall color and whether or not the tree produces flowers should be added. Mr. Montgomery would like to see the list in a user friendly form on the commission's web site. The commissioners would also like to provide a link to a public website like UCONN, National Tree Service, etc.

2. **Tree Policies/Ordinance/Permits**

Mr. Parlapiano said based on input from the last meeting, he shortened and revised the tree removal policy, using some of the mayor's old tree removal policy and adding reasons why public trees will not be removed.

One area of concern is utility maintenance, and posting tree removal notices on trees. Ms. Nathanson asked if tree trimming by a utility has to be posted, or should it just be by consent. Mr. Parlapiano said some towns give the utilities carte blanche. Mr. Harris discussed this with Mr. Greene yesterday. Mr. Parlapiano said in West Haven, even if the public works director and the tree warden give the utility carte blanche, a resident still has the right to object and call the utility to a hearing. Mr. Montgomery understands that some towns have given utilities carte blanche, but in Hamden, we feel the tree warden should hold this authority. He will need a lot of support from the Town. Mr. Parlapiano sent around a letter from Christie Hass showing how New Haven is handling this. They require approval on a tree by tree basis with the approval/review of the tree warden.

There was discussion on work being done by UI on a private tree. Mr. Parlapiano said the utilities are waiting for another big storm where trees fall and they can get the public behind them. Mr. Parlapiano said we should be reporting dead trees and trees that need pruning and making sure maintenance is being done.

Mr. Harris said CTPA met this week and he spoke to a lot of people/arborists, and an interesting point is that the utility companies have been awarded a large amount of money to do remove trees and they feel that they need to spend the money, which comes from rate payers. It appears that no money is being allotted to education and property maintenance and pruning of trees. We want to know UI's strategy for Hamden. Ms. Nathanson will invite Ken Bullard to a meeting.

The Tree Removal Policy will be good for Mr. Greene to use when working with the public.

The tree warden according to the law can issue a blanket or tree by tree decision. The commission needs to determine the policy the Town of Hamden will use. Ms. Nathanson said even if it is on a tree by tree basis, it has to be posed according to state law. Mr. Parlapiano said we need to say conditional permit rather than blanket permit. Ms. Sternberg asked if tree by tree is something we could suggest in the policy. Mr. Montgomery likes the way it is stated in the document, then we have to clarify this section stating that the tree warden needs to have the authority to carry out his duties.

Ms. Sternberg suggested a permit fee. Mr. Parlapiano suggested that if UI looks at 20 trees and wants to work on five, those are the trees that would be posted once the parties come to an agreement. People have 10 days to comment once a tree is posted.

A suggestion was made to take the utility maintenance paragraph out of the Policy, and let the town attorney look at it and see how the town policy intersects with the state law.

There was discussion on hazard and non-hazard trees. A hazard tree is a threat to public safety. There was discussion on making an accommodation for a tree affecting a sidewalk other than removing the tree. There was discussion on the reasons trees will not be removed.

Mr. Montgomery said there needs to be more research on utility maintenance.

**Mr. Montgomery made a motion to approve the Town of Hamden Tree Removal Policy (ver 2.1 dated 07/20/15 as amended at the Tree Commission Meeting of July 21, 2015, as attached). Mr. Brand seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

### 3. Commission website ideas

Mr. Parlapiano wrote to Chief of Staff Julie Smith letting her know the commission wants to work on its web site. She is willing to meet and will invite Patrick Donnelly who will be maintaining the web site. Mr. Parlapiano will forward dates during the last to the commission so a meeting can be set up during the last week of July or first week of August.

### 4. Other old business

Ms. Sternberg is working on the i-tree tree canopy with coverage assessment and tree benefits report. She is currently having trouble with her technology.

## New Business

### 1. Arborist RFP Update

Mr. Harris said the Town has continued him for the next year. Mr. Montgomery asked Mr. Harris to take a look at the three maples that are posted for removal at the Johnson Road Firehouse.

### 2. Public Works Tree Activity

#### Tree Planting/Removal/Pruning/Permits Issued

Mr. Parlapiano would like to keep this as a regular part of new business. He would like Public Works to tell us how many trees have been posted, removed, trimmed, etc.

Mr. Parlapiano would like to keep a list of our suggestions that make sense to the Town in front of someone who would make it happen.

### 3. Tree Requests

There has been an additional request for a tree through mayor's office, so we are up to 5-6 requests.

### 4. Fall Event Ideas

Several ideas were presented for fall events: a tree walk; a tree pruning class; meet the arborist (Mr. Harris would volunteer his services). Other ideas were a photo of the "tree

of the week” with a write up; a table at the Brooksvale Fall Festival. There are nature areas behind the Spring Glen School, West Woods School and the Shepard Glen School.

5. Other new business

Mr. Brand mentioned that he heard from Tom Vocelli about trees being removed near Menetti Field near Waite Street. The condition was that the trees that were removed had to be replaced. Mr. Vocelli wants to provide them with suggestions. Mr. Brand thought Mr. Montgomery might be able to help with this. Public Works will have to plant the trees. Mr. Montgomery will call Mr. Vocelli for clarification.

Mr. Harris suggested a ride up Blake Road and Blake Circle to look at what happens to beautiful trees that are not maintained. Mr. Parlapiano would like a clarification of what the Town's responsibility is when the Town plants a tree.

Ms. Sternberg mentioned the trees planted at Eli Whitney Park which might have originally been planned for Government Center.

Mr. Parlapiano had a call from Mike Iezzi regarding Monroe Street. There is a possible development where wetlands and a paper road, are involved. This will probably be coming up at the next Inland Wetlands meeting.

**Adjournment**

**Ms. Sternberg made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brand seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

# **Town of Hamden Tree Removal Policy**

Approved unanimously by the Tree Commission on July 21, 2015

## **Policy for Removing Public Trees**

The Town of Hamden will use its tree assessment procedures to ensure consistency in the approach to determining tree removal. In all cases, the retention of healthy trees is a priority.

The Town of Hamden will remove public trees meeting the following criteria:

### **Hazard Trees**

Any tree on Town-owned property or in the public right-of-way determined to be a hazard, - one that risks public safety and property – may be removed by the Town of Hamden. If the Tree Warden has determined that the danger is imminent, the tree may be removed without notice. In all other cases, the tree must be posted by the Tree Warden in accordance with state law.

To be considered a hazard, a tree must meet all of the following criteria:

5. The tree is sufficiently large enough to cause damage should it fall;
6. The tree has a target, that would be damaged should it fall;
7. The tree has a condition that would make it likely to fall. Such conditions may include dead or damaged limbs, insect infestation, disease, significant root damage, or other physical damage or signs of decay or distress as noted by the Tree Warden.

The Town will inspect all requests for removal. Final determination as to whether a tree is a hazard tree shall be made by the Tree Warden.

As the removal of hazard trees is in the interests of safety, not aesthetics, the Town may leave stumps or trunks in place until appropriate equipment can be assigned to complete the removal. The Town will remove all limbs and brush at the time of the removal; different recycling requirements for limbs versus trunks may require separate visits to complete the removal of a hazard tree.

The Town will schedule all work within its priorities and assigned resources.

## **Non Hazard Trees**

### **Infrastructure Improvement**

Public trees that fail to meet the definition of hazard tree may be removed as part of a *bona fide* infrastructure improvement or construction project at the discretion of the Tree Warden and in a manner consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes. The Town of Hamden will develop plans for the installation of new plantings, where feasible, prior to tree removal required for infrastructure improvement or construction projects.

### **Public Safety**

Hamden government agencies, including the Police Department, Fire Department, and Department of Public Works, may report to the Tree Warden any town tree that it is believed constitutes a threat to public safety, for example to motorists, pedestrians, or users of town recreational facilities. In the event that such a tree is identified, options including pruning, installing signage, or installing traffic signals will be evaluated. Removal of the tree will be performed only if no other cost effective alternative exists. Such removal shall be undertaken at the discretion of the Tree Warden and in a manner consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes.

### **Other Criteria**

Other criteria that will permit removal of public trees include the removal of weedy, noxious, invasive or poorly performing trees. In each of these cases, the tree must be posted by the Tree Warden in accordance with state law. With consideration of maintaining canopy cover, weedy, noxious, invasive or poorly performing trees removed through this process will be replaced with a tree from the town approved list.

Removal of public trees by the Town of Hamden will include the grinding of stumps within the priorities and assigned resources of the Public Works Department.

### **Public Trees will not be removed**

Requests to remove a town tree will not be granted for the following:

6. to facilitate views (including advertising signs)
7. off-street parking
8. installation of solar panels
9. to reduce the extent of leaf / flower / fruit drop
10. to reduce the impact from any bird or other animal waste or noise.