

## Minutes for the Williamsburg Board of Library Trustees

Friday, July 28, 2023 9:00 am

Meekins Library grounds

Present: Ken Borden, Joan Coryat, Todd Lynch, Charlotte Meryman (recorder)

1. The meeting was called to order by Charlotte at 9:47 a.m.
2. Todd led trustees around the property and shared his concerns about the following trees:

— **Large ash tree** at the back end of the parking lot has a lot of dead branches and is not thriving. It is currently cabled. Recommendation: Remove for safety reasons. This would be a big, expensive job and would require Conservation Commission approval due to proximity to the river. Adjacent maples likely would fill in the gap fairly quickly so no new plantings would be needed. Todd suggested it would be great to have some of the ash milled and used at the library in some way; ash wood will become rarer as more trees succumb to the emerald ash borer.

— **Elm and box elder** along the river by the benches are growing out of the river side of the retaining wall. Todd and Nick Dines are concerned they could destabilize the wall. They are also concerned debris could catch on the trunks when the river is high, acting as a fulcrum and intensifying flooding. Recommendation: Remove both. Again, this would be expensive due to the awkward positioning and would require ConCom approval. Replace with shade trees planted on the lawn. Some possibilities discussed for here and elsewhere on the property include red maple, tupelo, sweet gum, and tulip.

— **Sugar maple** next to river has a lot of dead branches and looks stressed. Recommendation: Start by having it pruned and see how it responds.

— **Crabapple** by front walk needs pruning. Recommendation: Todd will prune.

— **Norway maple** on Route 9 (closer to the P.O.) is not in great shape. Recommendation: Have it pruned, plant new shade trees nearby, and leave it in place while the new trees grow.

— **Arbor vitae** on Route 9 side are growing against the building. Recommendation: Remove the small nubbin touching the roof. Todd may be able to do that with the right tools or it may need to be hired out.

— **Red maples** (2) by the parking lot need thinning to improve branching structure and air flow and reduce snow load. Recommendation: Todd will prune.

### Other recommendations:

— Create a Master Visioning Plan for the grounds at both libraries. Todd would like to work on this. He has been consulting with Nick Dines, who has done the landscaping on

date. Todd would especially like to focus on ecological goals and possibly think about furthering the library's educational mission by using the space as a kind of demonstration landscape with informational elements. Trustees also discussed the possibility of finding ways to memorialize Bobbin Young and Jim Locke as we rethink the grounds.

— Next year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mill River Flood, and Todd suggested it would be great to get the grounds looking nice in preparation for that and potentially plan some events by the river related to it.

— Consider soliciting in-kind donations from local nurseries. Might we be able to get trees or shrubs discounted at the end of the season? To fill holes in the gardens, could we solicit local folks to share plants they are dividing in the spring? Could the Library Friends help with this?

#### Next steps:

— Todd will meet on site with Tree Warden Tom Por to discuss his concerns and recommendations and get his thoughts.

— Todd will start the process of filing an RDA (Request for Determination of Applicability) with the Conservation Commission, of which he was formerly a member.

— Todd will begin to think about which steps should happen when, after which we will need to talk with Town Administrator Nick Caccamo about funding options. Any work totaling more than \$10,000 will require an RFP (Request For Proposals) and a formal bidding process. The individual tree removals are unlikely to meet that threshold, but if several of them require bringing in large equipment, it would be more cost effective to combine them. Todd suggests the fall as a good time to do tree work, when the leaves are off the trees and people are less likely to be using the lawn.

3. Todd moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 am, Joan seconded, passed unanimously.

4. Next meeting: Monday, August 21, 2023, 7 pm, Meekins Library