

Village Green Committee
Monday, September 30, 2019 at 2PM in the Annex

Minutes

Attending: Gail Cromwell (2:10), Connie Kieley, Honey Hastings, Denise Collette, Peggy Cournoyer, Carol Mamczak, Robin Downes (3:20) Absent: Matt Cabana, Felicia Sartell, Kathy Fedorka

Also present community member, Charlene Eddy.

1. Carol called the meeting to order at 2:04 and asked for any changes to the agenda. Honey asked that the link that was sent out to everyone regarding best practices for prepping trees and shrubs for winter be placed in the news on the town website. All agreed and it will be sent to the webmaster. (action item)

2. Harvest Festival summary – In Felicia’s absence Connie spoke about the event and stated that we earned \$524.50 in profit, much of it coming from the sale of Gail’s lavender and the beans. She said that Felicia would like to do an inventory the day of the next Harvest Festival because we have no idea how many of each item were sold. She and Felicia will take care of it. Connie felt that the raffle profit may not have been enough to justify doing it the same way next year. It was suggested that we work with Ken Caisse and the fire department for better table placement, possibly next to them so people can buy beans to go with their meals.

At 2:10 Gail arrived and presided over the meeting.

Peggy was asked if she can sell more totes at the store. Gail will provide them to her. We discussed selling them at the holiday fair which will be held on 11/30. We need new ways to promote selling the totes to benefit the tree project. (action item)

Honey thought there should be more publicity for the HF and possibly a sub-committee to work with other town committees and non-profits to promote the event. She stated that “every door direct” would cost about \$225. Some felt that the HF is already publicized well enough. Posters advertising just VGC table were suggested as well as more social media presence. The will be discussed again closer to the next HF.

3. Treasurer’s report and 250th fund application – Connie reported that our balance is \$4247.09. The check to BroadOak for the arborist consultation is in the mail. She spoke about the total cost of the tree project and what we are applying to the 250th fund for. We discussed the quote from Weston Nurseries for Princeton Elms, estimated compost and mulch expenses for eight trees, added the pruning estimate (will seek a second estimate), soil tests, and stump grinding (Connie will get two estimates) and agreed that it will cost approximately \$2500. We

will apply for \$1000. They need to see costs for the entire project on the application. She will submit soon as the deadline is approaching. **Motion by Honey to approve the budget of \$2500. for the tree project including purchasing stump grinding services, new trees, compost, mulch and pruning services for the 2013 and newer trees. Seconded by Gail. Vote: Five in favor, Peggy abstaining.** (action item)

4. Trees on the Common update – Connie reported that the Select Board approved two motions, one for removal of any rotted tree including #3 on the Common and the other to authorize the VGC to have the adjacent trees (#s 2 and 4) removed this winter and replaced with two trees purchased by the VGC in the spring of 2020 in locations to be approved by the Select Board at that time. Carol reported that she has not heard back from UNH on the soil tests yet and they had not cashed the check she sent, but it is still early. Gail reported that the new date for the HLC wiring installation is Saturday, October 19th. She also stated that Matt had a suggestion when he arrived after the meeting – to not put the outlet on the cannon but run the line to the fence and use an extension cord back to the tree. The VGC members in attendance were in agreement with that suggestion. She will let Rob know. (action item)

5. Approve minutes of 8/26, 8/28, 9/10 – Honey suggested an amendment to 8/26 so that numbering would be clearer. **Motion by Gail to approve all minutes with one amendment to 8/26, seconded by Connie. Vote: All in favor.**

6. Poinsettia fundraiser – Should we do it? Looking through the archives, it appears that we only made \$190. on the flowers. Everyone agreed that it was too much work for the results. Denise stated and we all agreed that we do not need to do the poinsettia fundraiser. We would like to hear from Matt if we can do another HBTSOTR event.

7. Wreaths – last year we spent approximately \$180. on wreaths and bows for the town. We will discuss at next meeting since Felicia has the list of sizes and locations. We will definitely do this project again this year.

8. VGC “Big Picture” – Connie and Honey provided two different worksheets to guide our discussion. Connie’s stated the current mission statement and focused on all the things she feels need to be done in town and around the Common. Honey’s worksheet was sent as a memo to all committee members and focused on the functioning of the VGC, its primary responsibilities that the VGC would advise the Select Board on and what she considers optional tasks that the VGC may do.

The main points of the lengthy discussion were:

Do we want to be advisory in some situations?

If the town hires someone for weeding (for example), whose budget would it go in?

We would not be involved in the hiring or hours but give advice to SB.

We could lose control of the trees (for example) if the wrong person is hired.

We would retain responsibility; SB would not do anything without our advice.

The triangle garden is really called the Quarter-Millennial garden.

The front library garden is something we could advise on.

The Common is our main responsibility, but we could be listed as advisory to the SB on other gardens. The Common is a primary responsibility and the flower boxes are optional.

The Town Hall Committee does not want to give up control of their garden and neither does the library.

We could take on the library garden because we care about all the gardens. No one was attending the meeting representing the library. The library land is actually town land. We could ask if they want to be advised. Something needs to be done.

The Quarter-Millennial garden looks bad. Who takes care of it?

In the past we have supported library improvements such as removing the yews and pavement. Someone will speak with Kathy. She could take our ideas and her ideas to the trustees.

We can't take on the library garden with our current membership.

That would be listed as an optional task on Honey's list. We wouldn't be in breach of agreement with the SB.

The mission statement was restated.

We are looking to reduce responsibility.

We should be able to get help with what we can't do.

Can someone be hired for a few hours per week in the summer?

That person would do the weeding and watering.

Some items on Connie's list such as weed whacking should be done by the highway department.

We should advise the SB what needs to be done by the town crew.

The VGC paid for fertilizer and lime back in the 80's when they organized as a group. Should that be a town responsibility?

We should be aerating the Common. Driving on it is bad for the trees.

Driving on the Common was raised at the last SB meeting.

The VGC would like to see maintenance done on the Common

A couple of members have been deadheading and watering this summer, but some of the flowers in most boxes died. We need to consider plants better suited to climate.

Charlene Eddy suggested we ask for volunteers. It is her impression that volunteers are not welcome, although a specific example was not stated.

Our web page welcomes short-term volunteers.

In the past, Linda and Felicia called people.

We should create a list of highway department jobs. Budget Committee and SB may figure out how this could be done.

Were we talking about actually doing it vs. advising?

Are we considering plastic benches? No.

We could put anything to do with weeding the Common and weed whacking around the buildings on the town crew list. They could also do the major mulching in April.

We could ask for an annual budget for routine items such as mulch, replacement items, labor. The VGC would handle extraordinary items such as new trees.

Robin arrived at 3:20.

We could pay a person to water and weed. Most of our planters are on the ground but other towns have them mounted high.

One member wondered why she was asked to join the VGC if she wanted to just help plant flowers.

Do we ask for volunteers at Town Meeting? How about social media?

Do we ask for money for labor or rely on volunteers?

We need to ensure that outside spaces are maintained.

Do we request specific items from the Budget Committee? Would the VGC control and have a separate line item? They have two lines: general for things like mulch and specific.

Robin will speak with Cathy regarding the front library garden. Terraced plants are impossible to maintain. Maintaining or fixing will require substantial labor.

The goal is to simplify to reduce maintenance.

We need to fix the mess; it is on town land.

We need to hire someone to help maintain town gardens.

We had a discussion regarding quorums.

We set a date for the next meeting to work on the mission statement and continue this discussion. Friday, October 18th at 3PM.

We adjourned at 3:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Mamczak
VGC Secretary