



Clifton Park Tree Committee

Minutes of Meeting

July 27, 2026

Present: Diana Leis Delker, chair; Stu Feuerstein, Jim Harding, Marc Laymon, Steve Morse, Anne Orgren, Danne Parker, & Stacy Simmons. **Special Guest:** Councilwoman Nancy Bellamy.

Absent: Joanne Coons, Jerry Danielski, Chris Schmitt & Councilman Zabed Manir.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Committee Business

Tree Inventory – Davey Resource Group/Steve. Steve attended the Zoom meeting between Jen Viggiani, other town staff, and Moriah Day/staff from Davey on July 22, 2026. This meeting was to summarize the and conclude the tree inventory, or Part I of the grant project. Steve explained that Davey's team inventories 7,954 sites, slightly over the required 7,800 stated in the budget. Overall, 7,358 measurements and stumps were recorded on road rights-of-way and in parking lots. Also, 500 planting spots (again stated in the budget) were identified—most of those were along roads. There were comments about dying ash trees, about which the town is aware. The next step will be for Joshua Del Rio, Region 5 Forester for the Department of Environmental Conservation, to do a quality control check. He will be looking for an accuracy within an error rate of +/- 3%.

There was some discussion about the transfer of inventory data to Clifton Park and the value of the Town of Clifton Park having a subscription to TreeKeeper (Davey's proprietary software for tree inventories). We cannot properly manage the community forest without tracking tree plantings, removals, and pruning. TreeKeeper software costs \$3600 per year, but the Tree Committee strongly urges the Town Board to include this expenditure in the budget for Buildings & Grounds and the Highway Department.

Steve indicated that an inventory report and analysis will be forthcoming from Davey (tree species/sizes). He also shared that Davey is ready to proceed with the Part 2 of the project, a community forest management plan, and that the consultant wants to hold this public meeting sometime during the second half of September. The local library was recommended for the meeting location.

Training & Work on Invasive Species Management/Danne. Danne commented on the success of the training workshop provided by Addison Kubik from PRISM on May 16. Thirty people signed up, and 25 people attended, including several committee members and Councilwoman Bellamy.

Danne expressed an interest in continuing the work to deal with invasive vines, and in particular, oriental bittersweet. She talked about setting up both workshops (training events) and work parties (focused on removing vines), explaining that both have value. She discussed the possibility of returning to Veterans Park in the fall to remove the vines where berries will have grown (continuing the work started in May). Also, Jim expressed his dismay at the trees being choked by bittersweet vines at the Barney Road Golf Course, and he asked for help for those trees.

Danne talked about partnering with members of the Nature Preserve Working Group (set up by Open Spaces) and also said she would like to recruit more residents to help with this important work. Diana asked Danne to come up with a brief plan to outline her recommendations for the near future.

George C. Smith Park/Stu. Stu shared some photos of some of his ongoing projects and work at the park. Most notable was the photo of a metal sign that he had made that read: "Preserve Our Trees; They Preserve Us." Stu would like to do more signs like this to encourage people to value the trees. Committee members loved the sign and several people expressed interest in budgeting for signs like this and posting them throughout the parks.

Next, Stu talked about the butterfly garden that he has been working on for a few years. He cleared two areas and has been putting in various plants, including milkweed. He has also been stratifying seeds so that they can be planted successfully. He is concerned about the lack of water at the park, saying that he has to carry water to sites, which is time-consuming. Someone suggested a rain barrel. He also said that deer and rabbits have eaten some flowers. It is an ongoing challenge to keep the garden viable.

Last, Stu expressed frustration with teenagers and their motor/dirt bikes. They are destroying some sites in the park; unfortunately, he has no control over this problem.

Decision on Henry the Tree/Diana. Diana said that she had been in contact with Dan Clemens about the sad shape that Henry was in (white oak planted on Arbor Day at Veterans Park). Dan offered to buy a new tree and replace Henry. Diana asked members what they wanted to do about Dan's offer. Stacy said that, unfortunately, Henry was going to die and that pruning the tree at the top would not help at all. She then said that the problem is that the tree was watered while it was dormant. She said that should never be done or the tree will die. Stacy took soil samples but added that the tree was getting too much water and is now rotting. Also, the root collar was planted six inches too deep. She further commented that other trees at that park were planted too deep and that an oak is beginning to show problems because of that.

Unfortunately, Stacy's important discussion had to be halted due to time constraints. It was 7:00 p.m., and the GREEN Committee meeting was about to begin in the same room. Diana asked that Stacy be given ample time to present her findings and recommendations at the August meeting.

Diana passed around a sign-up sheet for members to help publicize the Tree of Distinction program. This is the push time to do so, since nominations close on October 1. Unfortunately, due to a mix-up, the chair did not get the email about the deadline for the Fall Parks & Rec Bulletin. This was a missed opportunity to get an ad in the booklet. Members are strongly encouraged to post the flyer where possible on social media.

Finally, a copy of the budget expenditures for 2025 and 2026 was circulated. Diana wants to discuss the budget at the next meeting, since it must be sent to Councilman Manir on September 1. Members are encouraged to think about expenses for 2027; we need to justify the budget that we submit.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.