Clifton Park Tree Committee

Minutes of Meeting

September 28, 2026

Present: Joanne Coons, Diana Leis Delker, chair; Stu Feuerstein, Jim Harding, Marc Laymon, Danne Parker, Stacy Simmons, and Councilman Zabed Manir. **Special Guest**: Councilwoman Nancy Bellamy.

Absent: Jerry Danielski, Steve Morse, Anne Orgren, Chris Schmitt.

Visitors: Diane Betswieser, Gurinder Garcha, Tom Piwinski.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Announcements:

- The next ReLeaf Meeting for Region 5 will be Thursday, October 15, at the Greenwich Public Library's Lower Level Meeting Room (148 Main St, Greenwich, NY 12834). The time and an agenda will be forwarded when received from Josh Del Rio.
- The deadline for Tree of Distinction nominations is October 1. Norah has been very helpful in publicizing the program on the town's website and on the electronic sign at Clifton Common.
- With Elisa's help, we are updating the Tree Committee webpage on the town's website. Elisa has some very good ideas about how to make the page more informative. Details will be sent to members for final input and approval.
- The "Tiny Pests" program on the hemlock woolly adelgid and beech leaf disease at the library presented by Chris Cash and Ben Furber was excellent, although attendance was lighter than hoped. Diana hopes to keep in touch with Chris and to involve him in another program in the future.
- Danne promoted the October Invasive Vines workshop planned for Saturday, October 24. People can sign up through Parks & Recreation. Members were encouraged to participate.

Committee Business:

Planning for Arbor Day 2027. Diana asked that two or three members work with her to come up with ideas for Arbor Day that could then be presented to the full committee for consideration. She is not going to assign anyone but asked that interested members contact her.

Discussion About Stacy's Presentation in August. Stacy's presentation in August was very detailed, citing human mistakes that have occurred with tree planting on Clifton Park's municipal grounds. Those mistakes are related to soil preparation, care of dormant trees, proper width and depth of the planting hole, and critically, the proper depth of the tree's root collar. Stacy had also stressed that we need to be vigilant about "right tree/right place." Finally, we need to be cognizant of proper pruning procedures and make certain that no one untrained in this important task be allowed to do it.

We acknowledged the wonderful job that Buildings and Grounds does for our municipal lands and park districts. However, there was a consensus that we need to create a positive learning opportunity to improve tree planting procedures as well as tree maintenance. It was recommended that a meeting be set up at an appropriate time with Dan Clemens, Stacy, and probably the chair to suggest scheduling one or two in-service workshops during a slow period, hopefully in the winter. Taping of the workshop is recommended so that new hires in Buildings and Grounds can view it when they come on board.

Other Discussions.

The conversation moved on from tree care to other issues. In terms of invasive vines, Jim again asked that the Barney Road Golf Course be prioritized to remove bittersweet vines. He said that trees were literally being choked to death. Danne acknowledged Jim's concerns and said she was trying to prioritize that for the future. Joanne suggested that, if we have a warm winter and B&G staff have some time, they could cut back the dead vines.

The discussion then turned to the local tree ordinance, which Joanne and Jim (a visitor) expressed concerns about. Diana shared that it was one of the committee's objectives to begin working on the ordinance this year but not present it to the Town Board until next year, so that it could be carefully studied. Joanne said we need to work on it now, and Zabed instructed her to list the changes she wants and to then meet with Kevin, the town attorney, to discuss them.

Unfortunately, there was not enough time to finish the agenda. The last item, pertaining to dirt bikes and e-bikes was tabled until the October meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.