

**BRANFORD GREEN COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
HELD MARCH 29, 2022**

PRESENT: David Minicozzi (*Dave*), David Colley, Don Gentile, Pat Sanders, Cynde Jasek, Susan Rood, Ann Freeman

GUESTS: First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove, Tree Warden Gary Zielinski, Cameron Pierce, Davey Tree Service

1. **Call to Order-** The meeting was called to order at 4:45
2. **Town Christmas Tree-** a plan was presented by **Jamie** and **Gary** to remove and replace the existing Town Christmas tree. The proposal includes planting a 25 foot white spruce at or near the location of the current tree. Such a tree has been identified at a nursery in New York State.

Jamie presented a history of the current tree, which was donated to the Town by VanWilgen's Garden Center c.30 years ago. He walked us through the various debates and concerns regarding the tree throughout the years. He said the proposal was not a "done deal," that no purchase orders had been made nor funds allocated or expended, no deadlines were looming, nor had any hard plan been cast. It was presented as an opportunity which may not be available if the current tree were in need of removal at some future time. He told us of a number of sources the Town has to fund the project if it were approved. A figure of c.\$20,000.00 was mentioned. Firm figures for the total cost of the project (removal and stump grinding, purchase of the tree, installation, after care) were not available.

The current tree was found to be in good shape at last September's annual Green Walk. However, upon further inspection by **Cameron** last month the tree was found to be infested with bark boring beetles, and was further found to have structural damage. For details see the attached letter of February 2nd, 2022 by Davey Tree Expert Company. **Cameron** expressed the fact that Green Walk inspections are cursory in nature and a more thorough inspection would tend to reveal greater detail regarding health or lack thereof. He pointed out the large crack on the subject limb and other aspects of damage and wear, which were evident upon up close inspection. His opinion was that the tree should be removed although it was not critical that it be done immediately.

Various concerns were expressed by Committee members such as the timing and exigency of the proposal; the source of funds to implement the plan; whether a new tree was contingent on removal of the current tree; the possibility of keeping the current tree and planting a new tree in a different location; whether the tree was, in fact, in urgent need of replacement.

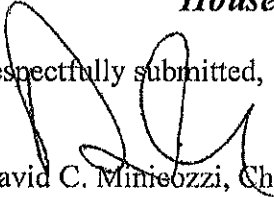
Pat made a motion to adopt the Town's plan and to have the current tree removed and replaced with the new tree to be planted at or near the site of the current tree, which

motion **Cynde** seconded. After due discussion the motion was approved with 5 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

3. **Adjourn-** upon motion by **Cynde** and seconded by **Pat**, after due discussion the motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:30

The next Green Committee meeting is scheduled to be held at the Community House on Tuesday, April 12th at 5:30PM

Respectfully submitted,


David C. Miniozzi, Chairman and Secretary Pro Tem

February 2nd, 2022

To whom this may concern,

A visual inspection was performed on a 15" diameter Blue Spruce on the Branford Town Green, tree #14 on Section A. This tree is inspected annually during the fall evaluation of all trees on the entire Green. Prior to the winter of 2022, this tree displayed no signs or symptoms of either structural or plant health issues. Upon inspection in late January several new things were noted. First noted were many large areas of resin sap on the main trunk. Resin exuding from the bark where not made by pruning cuts or damage from a wood pecker is usually an indication of bark boring beetles, which can be detrimental to tree health. When a bark boring insect tries to bore into the tree, it's the tree's natural response to push sap out to stop the borer. A healthy tree can do this, but not always indefinitely.

Also noted, a large crack on the lowest 10" diameter limb where it connects to the main trunk. While not new, the crack has increased in size, compared with previous inspections. This is most likely due the several heavy wind storms late in 2021. While not an immediate threat, the cracked limb does pose an imminent threat to public safety given the location on the Green. A pruning cut of this size would have a significant negative impact on the tree, especially given the fact the tree may already be infected with bark borers.

Cameron Pierce

The Davey Tree Expert Company

CT Arborist License S-5861