

DRAFT Minutes
Ridgefield Tree Committee
April 8, 2025
6:31 p.m.

**This is a Summary of the Activities of the Committee
and not a verbatim transcript**

In attendance:

Tree Warden: Steve Lavatori. Members: Tom McManus (Chair), Paul Shotton; Ryan Bossis, Ian Dow, Don Hulnick, Kitsey Snow (6:35 pm), Bob Roth (6:45 pm).

Approval of Minutes of Past Meetings

Mr. McManus referred to the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on March 11 that had been provided to the members in advance of the meeting.

UPON motion duly made (Shotton), seconded (Dow), and carried, it was RESOLVED that these minutes were APPROVED.

Motion passed: 4-1-1 (Snow abstain, Hulnick against).

Next Meetings scheduled

Mr. McManus reminded the Committee of the next meeting at 10am on Saturday April 26 at the Ballard Park Gazebo, and also Tuesday May 13 at 6:30pm. Neither the Library nor Rec Center has space in case of rain on April 26; event will be held rain or shine. David Beers from CT-DEEP Forestry Division will be available to attend.

When discussing survey work Mr. Beers had previously performed for the Town, Mr. McManus enquired about the program used to map tree locations with accompanying notes (reminding the Committee that outsourcing a survey has proven to be expensive).

Tree City

Mr. McManus relayed the news that Ridgefield was again recognized as a Tree City by the Arbor Day Foundation, and that new signs had been purchased and installed. He mentioned that the Committee should continue to be responsible for renewing the application each year; an annual Arbor Day celebration is an important requirement.

Finances

Expenditures of approximately \$400 for signs and saplings will be submitted. Members should remain aware of and pursue grant opportunities for the Committee to raise funds.

Presentation to Public

Mr. McManus reminded members of a prior discussion regarding a presentation to residents regarding trees and suggested a topic about tree disputes in New England (e.g. [1734](#) and [1772](#)) colonies during pre-Revolutionary times. Mr. Dow mentioned that he had some ideas and would follow up. Events in Ridgefield will be [coordinated](#). (N.B. underlined text has links to follow).

Sharing knowledge with the community

Mr. McManus reminded members of the work Mr. Shotton's draft circular "Raising Awareness of Tree Problems" that continues to be relevant to the Committee mandate. Further collaboration on this project is important and welcomed.

Reporting Hazardous Trees

A dangerous tree on Branchville Rd. near Middlebrook Ln was reported to Eversource and CT-DOT but was eventually removed by a contractor hired by homeowner.

Brainstorming ideas for Arbor Day Celebration on Saturday April 26

Mr. McManus again requested members to develop ideas to attract Town residents to Ballard Park in late April. Ms. Snow suggested booking a backup location (N.B. both Library, Rec Center unavailable), in case of inclement weather.

Ridgefield Golf Course Trees

Mr. McManus reported that he and Mr. Dow had spent some time evaluating trees around the golf course. A crew was busy removing fallen trees. There was evidence of live trees that had been removed from an area close to a green, which Mr. Lavatori mentioned was excessively shady (unhealthy for the turf). Ms. Snow mentioned that she would have shown the location of tree removal she considered unnecessary. Mr. McManus reminded the Committee that GPS coordinates are a useful tool and related that there are several notable trees on the course—including Dawn Redwoods—and an impressive White Oak on the west side of the parking lot (now unencumbered of vines).

Forestry management plan revision

Mr. McManus reminded members that he had circulated two versions (via email) of the Town of Ridgefield Forestry Management Plan; the original as most recently updated in 2003, and a partially updated version on which he had been working. He asked whether members had comments or suggestions, especially with regard to referenced resources in the original document (e.g. Bibliography pp 17-18; Relevant Websites and Contact Information page 26). These notes will be of continued interest and assistance to residents, members of the Committee, and tree contractors working on town property. Mr. Bossis requested a copy of the document in Word format which Mr. McManus provided.

Planting a tree for the Caudatowa Garden Club

Ms. Snow spoke with Melenie Rose of the Caudatowa Garden Club, about planting an Oak tree on the north side of the main entrance 90 East Ridge Rd (near the Governor St. intersection and uphill from the Playhouse sign). Ms. Rose would like to plant some perennials around the tree; Ms. Snow will recommend some nurseries where a suitable tree can be found.

Main Street Planting

CBYD (Call Before You Dig) has been surveying & marking proposed locations indicated by white stakes on either side of Main Street; approval still needed from CT-DOT.

Proposed Town Budget Capital Item for Tree Planting in Town Cemeteries

Ms. Snow mentioned that the 2026 Town Budget includes \$25K for the Tree Committee to plant trees in Town Cemeteries. Mr. McManus acknowledged the request, pointing out that as a capital expenditure of less than \$100k, it would not be an item on the May 13 Referendum ballot, but instead be considered at the Annual Town Meeting on May 5.

Adjournment

UPON motion duly made (Roth), seconded (Bossis), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned at 8:07 P.M. Motion passed: 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom McManus, Chair