

DRAFT Minutes

Town of Ridgefield Tree Committee

Tuesday September 15, 2026

This is a Summary of the Activities of the Committee and not a Verbatim Transcript

Attendees: Paul Shotton (acting chair), Ian Dow, Kitsey Snow, Bob Roth, Don Hulnick, Tree Warden Steve Lavatori (ex officio)

Excused: Tom McManus

Absent: Ryan Bossis

- The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm
- Minutes of the June and August Committee meetings not having been made available, their consideration and approval was held over to the October meeting.
- The Tree Warden reported the taking down of several dead elm trees and a dead ash, and the cleanup of minor damage after a recent storm.
- Mr. Hulnick reported that, despite the copious amount of rainfall this summer, several of the American chestnut trees planted at McKeon Farm over the last two years appear to have died.
- Prior to the meeting, Mr. Shotton had circulated to Committee members a series of photographs showing the development of fungal growth on a Bitternut Hickory tree on Golf Lane, near to the intersection with Lewis Drive. The photos evidenced damage caused to the bark of the tree more than twelve years ago, which subsequently led to an infection by the Northern Tooth fungus (*Climacodon septentrionalis*). Mr. Hulnick said he had observed a fruiting body (conk) on this tree in 2025, which was shed during the subsequent winter. Another conk appeared during August of this year. The Committee discussed the need to alert the Tree Warden and the Community to the potential dangers of such trees, given that the production of conks indicates extensive mycelial growth within the heartwood of a tree, potentially weakening its structural integrity. Mr. Hulnick suggested this might be a suitable topic to report to the Facebook group, helping both to alert and share knowledge with the Community and boost the group. Mr. Dow suggested that other means of boosting the group, such as through the purchase of ads, could prove expensive and may be ineffective.
- The Committee discussed again producing a new edition of the Community Forestry Management Plan, noting that a more concise document focusing on the responsibilities of the Tree Warden and Tree Committee, in particular in relation to the performing of tree work on Town Property, might better ensure compliance with the need to obtain a Permit from the Tree Warden in advance of such work. There was agreement that whilst the Committee should sharpen its focus on the Community Forest, the current scope of the Committee's work should not be narrowed.
- Mr. Shotton related to members the topic of the Spring mulching party for inclusion in the September edition of the Conservation Commission's Quarterly Newsletter and suggested three potential ideas for inclusion in the December Newsletter. A decision on the chosen topic does not need to be made until the Committee's November meeting.
- The Committee discussed the need to budget for the costs associated with the planting of new trees (removal of old stumps from prime locations and the replacement of fresh topsoil; tree-guards to protect trees from rodents and deer in more isolated locations, watering of trees during dry spells over 2/3 years to ensure their establishment, mulching trees to retain soil moisture and

inhibit competition from weed growth; initial and remedial pruning over the tree's life). Various suggestions were made for how to fund this budget, including asking the Town to match funds raised by the Committee to purchase and plant trees; explicitly setting aside some of the money raised for this purpose; and inviting homeowners whose property adjoins chosen locations to 'adopt' the tree, committing (in particular) to water it during the early years after its being planted.

- Mr. Roth proposed a motion that the Committee Chairman should work with the Tree Warden to plant six trees, in locations and of species of their choosing, before the end of this year's planting season. Motion seconded by Don Hulnick. Votes in Favor: 5, Votes Against: 0, Abstentions: 0
- Mr. Roth proposed a motion that the Committee adjourn at 7:30pm. Motion seconded by Kitsey Snow. Votes in Favor: 5, Votes Against: 0, Abstentions: 0