

## Beautification Commission (BC)

### Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2011 ~ 9:00 am

Town Hall Room B-3

**Present:** Suzanne Schutte, Heather Pommernelle, Cindy Ryan, Bob Baker, Sandy Drimal, Pam Elliot, Sandy Filmer, Sabina Harris, John Schlachtenhaufen, Phyllis Hawkins

**Absent:** David May, Marcia Meinerth,

Action items are noted in red.

### Signage

BB

- Jeremy Ginsberg sent Bob a letter. He's unhappy with BC's ideas on enforcement & publication, says sign people know the regulations, and that enforcement is the P&Z's responsibility not BC's. **Bob to initiate reply letter with input from BC.**
- Biggest issue that commercial signs are not reinforced, and information on town website is not clearly posted. Bob wants to initiate campaign to gain understanding of political parties to decrease sign violations for the next election. Letter to the editor also suggested.

### Update on Meeting with Republican Group/Members Terms

SS/CR

- Suzanne and Cindy presented an update on the BC to Republican Town Committee. Pam, Cindy and Suzanne were reinstated to the BC; Lesley Kroll has stepped down; Sig still on the BC by default, he just doesn't attend meetings. **Suzanne to write letter asking Jayme Stevenson to add David as a new member on the BC.**
- Heather to be Secretary, taking over from Sabina.

### Tree Conservancy Update

JS

- John mentioned recent Tree Conservancy activities to include a seminar on CT favorite native trees, and tree plantings at exit 11 and the corner of Ledge and Post Road. The narrow tree at the Exit 11 island will be moved to Exit 13; an evergreen will replace it at Exit 11. Many trees will additionally be planted at Exit 13. The annual TC Plant Sale netted 60+ Redbuds that have been and are being planted around Darien, to include several trees at each school. Volunteers at the schools will manage the watering; otherwise new plantings on town property will have gator bags to keep them watered.

### Clean-up Recap

ALL

- Very happy with results. Almost 100 people helped out. 1,000 daffodil bulbs were planted at the berm by DHS students. Boy Scouts, Senior Men, Green Team, Choose to Reuse – many groups were involved. Some photos were submitted to local media. Worked well to have date when on standard time so lighter in the morning. Suzanne to submit a letter to the editor to thank all involved.
- Suggested April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Earth Day) as our next clean-up day. **Sabina to double-check that 4/22 doesn't conflict with school vacations.**

### AAG Update:

CR/HP

- Cindy reported on recent clean-ups: Corbin Road Post Office, CVS entry island, Exit 13. The Darien Train Station (NY bound) has an existing large bed, possibly a new garden?
- Discussed planters (6) currently in NH. Difficult to move? Should we look for replacement pots?
- Potential new sponsors: Andrew from Kings Highway Tennis is interested in a new spot. Republic Party is likely to take one as well in the new year. Richard (landscaper) was noted in a previous meeting as wanting a spot; he appears to have changed his mind. **MM to provide status on paid AAG sponsorships.**
- Suggested guidelines for gardens: planting plan needs to be approved by BC, recommend natives and drought tolerant, no signage other than what's provided by us. NH Stop & Shop AAG has flags and 9/11 poster: **CR/HP to have the signs taken down.**

## Berm Update

SS

- SS showed David May's landscape drawing for the berm. Need to demarcate where the town is and isn't to mow. Plantings will be broken up into a few phases based on funds. DM would like to order plugs shortly, larger than 3" that we could plant in the spring. **DM to do a presentation with full details at our next meeting.**
- CR raised maintenance as an issue that we need to be clear about including costs. DM is exploring currently, we'll discuss during his presentation.
- TC to plant donated trees within the design. JS has gained town permission to plant trees.

## Discussions with DPW

SS

- Suzanne met with George and his team 11/10. So far they've provided mulch for Kelley's garden, and picked up piles of weeds as requested. Still to pick up 13 bags from Saturday's berm clean-up, and mulch the Exit 13 garden. **SS to ask them to move extra mulch (at Kelley's) to CVS.**
- We'd requested that Exit 13 be mowed. 2 issues: the DPW will not mow any more for the rest of the year, and it's state property and thus the state is responsible for its care.
- The state objects to boulders we placed at Exit 11, says there are visibility issues. However the state is not responsible for this island, BC was given approval to adopt the island and manage it (within given town regulations, which have been followed). **SS to write a letter to Jim Barnes at DOT asking that we be given a waiver from following state regulations and reminding Jim that he was the person who approved our adoption of the island last year.**
- Discussed possible locations for grasses we grow for the berm. Dump area off limits. Space is available on Weed Beach near sewage area; there's a water source. Cindy mentioned the Darien Garden Club is planting near this area; **Cindy to double-check that where we plan to store grasses would not interfere with this planting.** We would need to organize watering amongst ourselves. Sandy D mentioned Marcia's back property may also be an option; would need deer fencing; **Suzanne to speak with Marcia.** Suzanne alternatively suggested the disused bocce ball court at the Senior Center; it may need fencing.
- Could we buy a pump to water the berm? George has a 200g 5hp pump which is always busy. Sue Swiatek (head of P&R) also has a 2<sup>nd</sup> pump that he believes is not used. **Suzanne to approach with help from Sandy F.** If we do gain access to the pump, it would need to be towed by a truck or SUV, and we as BC would need to physically do the watering. Penny Glassmeyer may also be interested in helping on the berm (watering? adopt the berm?); **Sandy F to approach her.**

## Meeting Schedule for 2012

SS

- Dates as follows: Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12, Apr 2, May 14, Jun 11, Jul 9, Sep 10, Oct 1, Nov 12. Hanging baskets would be around May 24<sup>th</sup>. No meetings scheduled for August and December 2012.

**Next meeting: December 12<sup>th</sup>, 9am. Room TBD: it will not be B-3 in Town Hall.**