

**Petersham Forest & Shade Tree Committee Meeting**  
**November 20, 2014, 5:30pm**  
Petersham Country Store

**Attendees:** Melissa LeVangie (chair), Steve Herzog, Sheila Youd, Jim Baird, Tamara Castagnaro, Abbie Castagnaro, Clarisse Hart (notes)

**Overview:**

The group discussed the newly approved Wood Bank (especially details for Volunteer Work Days) and Wood Policy.

**Summary of Action Steps**

- **All committee members** will
- **Abbie** will
  - Follow up with Deb Bachrach to determine steps for developing a special fund for the Forest & Shade Tree Committee.
  - Design an awesome logo for the Wood Bank!
- **Melissa** will
  - Work with Sean on Saturday to make the log pile safer and more manageable.
  - Bring a 5-gallon jug of water and a first aid kit to volunteer work days.
  - Get the transfer station key from Bob Clark for volunteer work days.
  - Create “be here at your own risk” signs for the wood landing and the transfer station.
  - Loop Abbie into financial conversation with Deb Bachrach.
  - Generate a list of people who could run Wood Bank work days in her absence.
- **Tamara** will
  - Collaborate with Clarisse on voucher doc.
- **Clarisse** will
  - Continue press outreach for Wood Bank.

**Next meeting: Thursday, December 18 at 5:30pm at the Country Store.**

## Meeting Minutes

**Melissa called the meeting to order at 5:40pm.**

### *Agenda Item 1: Review Minutes*

Need to edit the October minutes to correct misspelling of Stephen's name.

Melissa motioned to approve the October minutes with the correction, seconded by Steve. All ayes, **October minutes approved.**

### *Agenda Item 2: Wood Policy & Wood Bank*

Our Wood Policy was approved (with an edit in the third paragraph) in a very positive and supportive Selectboard meeting on Nov. 17. Wood Bank wording was discussed (edits and questions below) and approved as a "living document" to be revised and altered by May by this committee as we learn from this year's pilot program.

#### *Edits to the Wood Bank document*

- Melissa has the list of edits to the document, which include:
  - Spelling out pick-up hours at transfer station
  - Only one voucher request per week per individual/household (not determined yet)
  - Wood not for sale or transferrable to others; violators will be disqualified from participating in the future.

#### *Wood Bank finances*

- Special Fund: Anne Townsend and Deb Bachrach from the Cemetery Commission both stated during the meeting that the Hearse Account was very easy to set up and Deb would be happy to work with us to make a plan. **Melissa will loop Abbie into this conversation; Abbie will follow up with Deb to make a plan!**
- Tax-deductible donations to Wood Bank: Tax letters for donations can be written by the Town (Steve Boudreau confirmed this); Sheila also suggested this could be done with a thank you note that contains boilerplate tax-deductible donation language.

#### *Background on Wood Bank Planning and the USFS grant*

On Nov. 7, Melissa met with Bob Clark and Sean Mahoney. Sean is an outreach service forester for the Mass. DCR. He has secured a USFS grant for landowner education in the Quabbin to Cardigan region; the money allows them to do chainsaw education, forest management plans and planning for wood utilization, invasive species education, and to create a wood banking system (hopefully to create a model for other towns). He's identified Petersham, Athol, and Orange to be target communities for the grant. Our volunteer hours spent on the Wood Bank should be logged to submit as in-kind grant match.

#### *Details: Volunteer work days*

- Volunteer work days are Nov. 23 and 30.
- Melissa is the point person for Wood Bank volunteer days but **she will generate a list of people who could do this in her absence** (main qualification is safe chainsaw work).
- Anyone using mechanized equipment will have to be approved by Melissa upfront as qualified for safety. Other volunteers will stack and transport wood.
- Orange and Athol Tree Wardens will be coming Nov. 23 and Nov. 30 (respectively) to help.
- In a perfect world, each work day, we'll process 5 cords of wood.

- Harvard Forest donated a wood splitter for the work days.
- Through his grant and contacts, Sean Mahoney has been able to get gloves, eye protection, hearing protection, mauls and wedges, and gas for the splitter and chainsaws. Sean was at the wood landing today, bucking wood.
- **Sean and Melissa will go on Saturday to make the wood pile safer and more manageable to work around.**
- **Melissa will put together “be here at your own risk” signs for the wood landing and the transfer station,** as suggested by Peter George.
- **Melissa will get a key from Bob Clark for transfer station on Sunday.**
- **Melissa will bring a 5-gallon jug of water and a first aid kit.**
- Bill Purple will drop off his donated coffee and donuts around 11am.
- Clarisse circulated a press release, which will be printed in local papers. Other media are also interested and may come to the Nov. 23 volunteer day.

#### *Questions about the Wood Bank*

- Sheila: how do you qualify for a wood voucher?
  - Call Steve Boudreau between 9am on Monday and 4pm on Thursday. He records contact info (this can also be a record to add people to the list for future volunteer opportunities). He will also ask if they are already qualified for fuel assistance (those people will get priority on the final list). Friday morning, he will count names down the list until all the wood is accounted for. He'll call the folks who got vouchers, and they can come pick up the vouchers at Town Hall, or the voucher can be emailed.
    - Tamara noted that asking about fuel assistance may open people's eyes to options they didn't know about. Clarisse added that the state-funded fuel assistance group for our region would probably be glad for us to share their info.
    - Clarisse suggested we come up with ways for people to volunteer even if they can't cut/haul wood. Not as a quid-pro-quo for receiving fuel assistance, but just as a way to give back if they want to.
- Sheila: What if people feel embarrassed about the lack of anonymity (picking up wood at transfer station, etc.)?
  - That is an issue. We are trying to minimize the number of people they deal with (i.e. just Steve Boudreau).
- Steve: what time do we arrive Sunday? 10-3. Splitters/cutters will probably be there 8-10.
- Steve: To what length will the wood be cut (different stoves use different lengths)?
  - M: We decided to go with 16", although we know there are smaller stoves than that. Maybe that will shift in conversation with the wood splitters this weekend.
- From Selectboard meeting: How much wood is in the “sections” or “pallets”?
  - We'll measure out the amount that fits in a pick-up truck.
- Sheila: What if we don't get rid of the wood?
  - We as a committee will come up with ways to distribute it. Tamara suggested that we could probably identify people who could use it but may not have been willing to ask.

#### *Looking Ahead: Wood Bank To-Do's*

- **Abbie will design an awesome logo for the Wood Bank!**
- **Tamara and Clarisse will work together on the voucher document.**
- Melissa suggested that in the future, it would be great to put out a request for local artisans to make a wooden sign for the Wood Bank.

*Agenda Item #3: New Business*

- Thinking about locations for spring plantings: possible gateway planting in front of 45 N. Main.
- Possible Arbor Day volunteer workday this year: land management around the Craft Center (invasives removal, etc.).

**Next meeting: Thursday, Dec. 18, 5:30pm at the Country Store.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.**