

**MINUTES
CORNISH PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 14, 2016**

The Cornish Planning Board met on Thursday, January 14, 2016. Members present were Bill Lipfert, Chair, Gwyn Gallagher, Mary Mancuso and Jay Young; Scott Baker, Selectman; and Heidi Jaarsma, Secretary.

David Crane of Eversource attended the hearing. Also in attendance were Jim Barker, Frank Parks, and Jenny Schad.

Bill Lipfert called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Eversource – Pubic Hearing re: Scenic Road Tree Removals pursuant RSA 231:158

The Planning Board held a public hearing pursuant RSA 231:158 regarding the removal of trees designated as hazardous by Eversource Energy along the following town of Cornish roads designated as scenic: Lang Road, Platt Road, Saint Gaudens Road, Whitten Cemetery Road.

Notice of the hearing was published in the *Eagle Times* and *Valley News* on 1/5/16 and 1/6/16. Notice was also posted on the town of Cornish website, at the Cornish Elementary School, and the Cornish Town Offices.

Bill Lipfert opened the public hearing. David Crane presented the proposed work as part of a regular four-year maintenance cycle. It has been four years since work has been done in the western half of Cornish. Any limbs or brush 4” and diameter or less are removed per Eversource specifications. Clearing to the side of conductors is species specific. Larger trees are removed on a case by case basis. Twenty-four trees have been identified in the scenic road area for removal. The trees were described by Mr. Crane as dead, dying, decayed or having structural defects. Asplundh has been contracted to do the removals. Contractors have contacted all customers affected by the work. Mr. Crane anticipates work to start by the end of next week.

Gwyn Gallagher asked about trees at the intersection of Gap and Saint Gaudens. The trees were not flagged; however, they were of concern in Mr. Gallagher’s opinion. He felt the trees were prone to fail. David Crane said that the Board could add the trees. Heidi Jaarsma asked if all trees were in the road right of way. Mr. Crane said that trees on the borderline were also identified. Heidi Jaarsma asked about the 36” maple on Platt Road. Mr. Crane said that there was a lot of rot in the back of the tree. Mr. Crane said that there may not be a bucket truck tall enough to take down part of the pine. Mr. Crane said that he could direct the contractor to take only the leader out of the maple. Gwyn Gallagher concurred. The pine in the same vicinity with the rotten leader may be completely removed. Mr. Lipfert asked about the area considered for removal. Mr. Crane responded that anything with the potential to hit the line was taken into consideration. A typical utility right of way is fifty feet.

Jim Barker, Conservation Commission Chair, said that he had found most of the trees on the hazard list. His only question was regarding the 36” sugar maple. He did not look at the back of the tree. He asked about two dead branches on a group of maples on Saint Gaudens road. He

felt that they might be good branches to remove. Mr. Crane said that the limb likely would fall within the regular maintenance specifications. Mr. Barker spoke on behalf of the Commission that the Conservation Commission had no objection.

Jenny Schad asked how the work area would be left. Mr. Crane said that trunks would be cut close to the ground unless there was barbed wire in the tree. Some landowners also ask that trees be left tall to serve as wildlife habitats. The wood is the property of the landowner. Brush will be chipped and cleaned up. If any brush is left behind, Mr. Crane asked to be contacted. Mr. Lipfert asked for the size specifications delineating brush from wood. Mr. Crane replied that most chippers will do up to six inches. Mr. Lipfert asked if it would be a fair assumption that anything five inches and under would be chipped. Mr. Crane said that for hardwoods, 4" was a better estimate, for softwoods, 6". Larger wood would be left in four foot lengths. If the landowner wanted the wood longer, the contractor would make an effort to leave it so dependent on safety. Ms. Schad also asked if some of the wood could be used for the wood bank at the recycling center. Gwyn Gallagher said that there is quite a bit of wood at the town wood bank. Mr. Crane said that he would take a contact number to let people know where hardwood could be picked up. Ms. Schad also asked about a pole near Cornish Flat. The pole is in the Liberty Utilities territory.

Frank Parks asked if this was part of scheduled maintenance or a danger tree program. Mr. Crane said that hazardous trees are dealt with during regular scheduled maintenance. Hazardous trees and regular maintenance are two separate budgets; however, the work is often done simultaneously. Mr. Parks asked regarding the condition of the poles in the area. Mr. Crane said that he has noticed some that need to be replaced. Red and white flagging on a pole means that it has been marked for replacement.

Mr. Gallagher asked that chips not be blown onto a bank so that they do not end up in a ditch. Mr. Crane agreed and added that he would direct crews not to blow chips in stone walls. Mr. Gallagher asked if there was work planned for Gap Road. He mentioned a large dead pine over the wires.

Gwyn Gallagher made a motion to authorize the proposed tree removals on the three scenic road with an effort made to remove only the leader on the 36" maple on Platt Road. Scott Baker seconded the motion, and the vote of the Board was in the affirmative, 5-0.

Gwyn Gallagher made a motion to adjourn. Scott Baker seconded the motion, and the vote of the Board was in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi M. Jaarsma