

Bowdoinham Tree Committee

Meeting Agenda *Minutes*

April 1, 2026

1. Meeting called to order: 6:00

2. Attending: Peggy Christian (chair), Joanne Joy (invitee from the Select Board), Hank Ogilby (secretary), Susan Drucker, Francis Drummond, Mark Tanner, Mike Roland, Nina Mendall

3. Review and approve minutes from March 4, 2026 - a motion was made to approve, seconded, and approved.

4. Introductions - Joanne Joy, Select Board Member: done!

5. Discussion: Where do we go from here?

- Peggy offered an introduction/review of where we are now.
- Joanne offered her background v/v tree committee, maybe more as a citizen than as a select board member.
- Various comments/discussion/questions ensued:
- The idea of creating a tree plan was pushed to the front more from community concern, than from any formal town initiative.
- There are several other initiatives: CPC, Open Space, The New Riverfront Park has a tree plan in place.
- However the new park organization doesn't really have a "home" within the current town committee structure.
- It might be good to see a copy of the New Riverfront Park tree plan.
- Peggy: The CPC is reviewing consultant groups to help with an Open Space Plan. There are 3 groups under consideration, and this work has come in under budget.
- Joanne: "Your plan will have the most impact as part of the Open Space Plan... especially in that a consultant will soon be in place."
- And, if the group wants a standing committee, or a conservation committee, such a tree focused group could be identified as part of the plan, but those actions would come later.
- Joanne: Moving to implementation of any sort of tree plan would essentially be impossible at this time, because the plan doesn't "live" anywhere (ie. CPC, Parks & Rec, etc...), thus there is no means/committee/structure for implementation.
- Frank: "We never saw the first document (from Joanne/Dave A., that Jan shared at our last meeting) ... it could have been very helpful had we seen it earlier."
- Joanne: I don't think the town is ready for implementation yet, BUT, almost all initiatives lead to "guiding actions"... people often change their behavior when they are informed multiple times of any sort of initiative/action.
- Susan: Is funding the only resistance you see?
- Joanne: It gets hard without a town staff member. The town staff can lose touch with various operations (especially if they are primarily volunteer staffed).
- Mike asked about the potential of a permanent committee.

- Frank: Asked about our discussion of a Conservation Committee.
- Peggy: clarified the difference btw. a conservation *commission* vs. committee
- Joanne reviewed how various committees evolve within the town governance framework.
- Mark: It seems like this could take another year?
- Peggy: The CPC's goal for an Open Space Plan is to present it for the 2027 Town Meeting... our tree work could be part of this in some/various forms.
- Joanne: We could ask the Select Board to change our mission... there are a whole bunch of things we could do as a next step... ie. tree survey.
- There was a discussion about Project Canopy, what help/role they might provide.
- Susan: I'm still confused as to how our current plan couldn't be given to an organizational body to begin implementation?
- Joanne discussed the process for Town Meeting, warrants, select board rules etc...
- Joanne suggested that we could ask the CPC to make this part of their warrant.
- Mike asked: Isn't this what we've essentially done? And they rejected it?
- Discussion ensued regarding the sidewalks, DOT, and the trees that will come down.
- Peggy asked a question of the committee: How do you all feel about folding our work into the Open Space Plan?
- Mike clarified the scope of each plan (our plan and the CPC Open Space Plan), and how they aren't quite the same mandates.
- Peggy is aware of this, but doesn't see a conflict.
- Joanne thinks that our plan could easily be folded into the Open Space Plan.
- Mike cited that the Open Space Plan doesn't directly mention trees.
- Joanne offered: Try suggesting a Stage 2 for this committee - ie. these are the 3 things that need to happen next (ie. tree survey etc...). Something like: "We think it's a good plan, and here's what we'd like to do next."
- A discussion of the governing/approval process ensued.
- Joanne thinks that we will always get some push-back as long as we continue to be a sub-committee.
- Peggy: We haven't done enough community outreach/communication/education (she mentioned what happened with the Housing Committee).
- Frank discussed our relationship/lack of it v/v the CPC
- It was noted that Jan did represent us at the CPC, but maybe (as Mike offered) more of us should have been there...?
- Discussion ensued regarding the semantics between a "proposal" vs. "plan".
- Mike asked: "What would make it a plan?"
- (Our favorite cyclical discussion ensued... again...)
- Joanne tried to clarify the differences between a plan and a proposal, and noted that, indeed it may be largely semantics.
- (Our favorite cyclical discussion ensued... again...)

- Joanne feels that putting our wording/plan down in a more succinct framework, broken down into more categories, next steps, recommendations, including budgetary implications (and asking for a line item in the budget), would be a good next step.
- Discussion ensued about us/some of us coming into a CPC meeting and advocating etc...
- Mike: "We're on the agenda for the next meeting...so?"
- Joanne: Come with a new version of our plan, and ask for some discussion time.
- Also, maybe look at some of the town's other plans: sidewalk, waterfront etc...
- Frank reviewed our wording, and proposed: Let's craft this more as a plan (not aiming at a stand-alone tree committee), let's work on rewording. We have a lot of "a plan" here.
- Joanne: Creating a standing committee could be part of our plan... if we wanted.

Peggy posed the question/motion: "Do we want to blend our work with the CPC & their Open Space Plan?"

It was asked, what exactly is the motion that we are voting on?

Motion: "Shall we participate more actively in the CPC, and the Open Space Plan process, to ensure that our work gets more exposure regarding our goals etc..."

We can still exist as a tree committee, but we will have more active liaisons with the CPC.

The Motion was proposed, seconded, discussed and approved.

Various discussion/follow-up ensued:

- Joanne kindly offered to return and help facilitate in whatever ways we feel might be useful.
- Nina discussed the timings of our meetings v/v the cemetery committee and CPC meetings (noting a logical flow for easy communication). She noted that we could start doing some of our inventory work within the cemeteries.
- Joanne suggested that Peggy and other CPC members ask the potential consultants for the CPC if they have any experience with municipal tree plans.
- Discussion ensued around getting more information about us and our work "out there": town newsletter, Bowdoinhammer etc...
- Research says that information must be reinforced from 7 - 21 times for people to notice.

We will meet next month (May 6th), and we will continue the work with our plan, rewording, rephrasing, as suggested by Joanne and others.

- Joanne offered to read/edit. And, ask now to get on the Select Board Agenda... after town meeting.
- Hank will post a new, clean version of our plan on our google.drive, with editing instructions so that we all can do some work before our next meeting.

6. Possible Emerald Ash Borer response, if time - tabled, but it was noted that we need to really start acting on this!

7. Meeting adjourned at: 7:32

Signed: _____