

JOHNSON TREE BOARD

DATE: November 19, 2014

TIME: 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Johnson Public Library

PRESENT: Noel Dodge, Sue Lovering, Dorcas Jones, Court Perry, Louise Von Weise

ABSENT:

This meeting was held at the library despite the agenda listing the Johnson Municipal building as the meeting location. Miraculously we all made it to the library, with only Dorcas visiting the municipal building first.

We resolved to not meet again until February or March due to lack of tree work to do or discuss over the winter. The early spring meetings will be used to plan the summer watering and tree pruning activities.

Sue attended the annual Tree Stewards Meeting and was given about 30 Locust tree (species not remembered) seeds as a reward for knowing that *Gymnocladus* is the Genus of the Kentucky coffee tree. The parent Locust tree is said to have been the tree that President Lincoln stood under to give the Gettysburg address. We will have to discuss where we might plant them. Proper planting techniques for germination were discussed as these seeds need to be roughed up and then boiled to get proper germination. The giver of the seeds noted that he gets two of about every 12 seeds to germinate. Noel speculated that the need for such harsh treatment of the seeds is the result of the seeds evolving the need to be digested by wildlife, likely birds.

Dorcas motioned to have Sue's cats eat the seeds to help them germinate, but received no seconds and the motion was dismissed.

Similarly tough tree species were brought up, Noel brought up osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*), Sue mentioned that it evolved with Woolly Mammoths and that she read a paper somewhere about how osage orange is a leftover anachronism from the ice age and that without the mammoth to eat it, it is thought that it will die out eventually. In fact, 500 years ago when the Spanish returned the horse to its continent of origin they unknowingly restored a key dispersal partner for osage orange. Apparently, once-prolific osage orange was heading toward extinction for lack of dispersers. The return of the horse, along with the tree's appeal as an ornamental, reversed this downward evolutionary trend (Barlow 2001).

Mammoths were confirmed to be extinct, however Court brought up that they might not be for long, referencing the recent paper raising hopes of cloning them. Sue thinks we need some Mammoths what with the cold weather we've been having, if for no other reason than to give Sasquatch something to play with. Noel noted that Sasquatch likely rode mammoths.

It turns out the seeds of Honey Locust are also a "Botanical Ghost of Evolution" and are adapted to be dispersed by long extinct North American herbivores.

The idea of the potential for winter programs was brought up. No one was interested, but we reserve the right to change our minds in future years.

The tree in front of the maple fields that was run over this summer was discussed. Sue gave an update. After some insurance company wrangling and eventual refusal to cover to estimated \$500 to replace the tree. The individual who ran over the tree offered the town \$100 and the trustees accepted. Unfortunately \$100 will likely not buy a new tree of the same size, so we will have to hope to find a cheap one and have the town crew install it, maybe next year.

For Arbor Day (Friday May 2nd) we would like to plant a Maple tree on the library lawn. Sue talked to Jeanne and the idea was well received. Noel offered a free maple to be dug up from his property if desired.

Louise brought up the main street trees (North side) which were stressed last year and whether we think they will survive another year. Sue mentioned that when we did the tree inventory with the State foresters many of them mentioned that they would let them go and see if they continue to improve. The foresters thought that the trees were still very stressed from planting and needed time to develop better root systems. They also recommended against any fertilizer.

During the tree inventory, Sue talked with a forester who worked on the main street project who said that the plan called for all the trees to be planted in "Structural Soil". Having all dug around the base of many of these trees and seen one removed, we all agreed that that does not seem to be the case and wondered if this may be contributing to their poor health. The forester promised to look into it but has not been heard from since. Sue hopes to follow up with her soon. The same forester informed Sue that Johnson has been identified as a site for some state forestry ceremony/function of unknown scope or timing other than this spring. We will await additional information.

Spending money was brought up. We discussed an electric pump for watering, a gas pole saw for pruning, loppers for pruning, for the main street trees. The only purchase approved was the aluminum tree tags. Watering and associated apparatus will be discussed again in the spring.

Sue pointed out that there are a number of documents on the town website regarding zoning. In each one, the options that look the best had trees!

A separate website for the tree board was proposed by Sue. The board decided that the current town page is adequate. Sue would like to add some photos to spruce it up. Court brought up the idea of photographing before and after our pruning efforts. Everyone agreed that we should remember to take photographic documentation of work we do.

Court mentioned that the Conservation Commission had planned an apple tree release on the Gomo property and that he thought that was an activity the tree board could participate in. The Board agreed. Noel thought it would be easy to include the tree board members in communication regarding such field work.

Sue says that the tree inventory done by the state and the tree board will be in draft form and ready for review in November (sometime). The state is going to make bound copies for the tree board to approve and then provide what copies we request. We will review and decide whether to continue with our own tree specific notes to adopt theirs.

The meeting adjourning at ~8:00 PM.

The next meeting will be held at the Library at 6:30 on the third Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 18 at the Library at 6:30.
Submitted by Noel Dodge, Secretary.

Barlow, C. (2001). Anachronistic fruits and the ghosts who haunt them. *Arnoldia* 61(2), 14-21.