

VILLAGE OF PITTSFORD
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Special Meeting May 30, 2018 at 5:00 PM

PRESENT:

Chairperson: Justin Vlietstra
Members: Jo Anne Shannon
Renee Stetzer
Susan Lhota

Others in attendance:

Paul Schenkel, Town of Pittsford Director of Public Works
Dan Keating, Village Trustee

Motion: Chairperson Vlietstra made a motion, seconded by Member Stetzer, to call the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Vote: Shannon – yes; Vlietstra – yes; Lhota – yes; Stetzer - yes. *Motion carried.*

Town of Pittsford, referral of Copper Beech Park landscaping plans

Discussion: Member Vlietstra said that the Town of Pittsford has referred plans for alterations to Copper Beech Park to the Planning Board for comments.

Paul Schenkel, director of public works for the Town of Pittsford introduced the project to the Board. He stated that the reason for the new plans for the park is the beloved 200 year old Copper Beech tree was diseased by a fungus and had to be removed. The Town became aware that the tree was diseased in 2011 and has extensively consulted with experts on its health. Treatments for the fungus were attempted but were unsuccessful. The fungal disease made the wood brittle and the tree could not be saved. The Town retained experts to validate the diagnosis and they used innovative equipment to do an 'X-ray' of the trees structure to assess its health. The opinion of experts is the tree was diseased and could not be saved; they were surprised the tree was still standing. A large branch fell in 2015 which destroyed the fence and damaged a car. The Town felt that the tree needed to be removed at this time as it presented a significant danger of falling and causing extensive damage. The Town has saplings that were cloned from the old tree and about 40 people have requested specimen for their yards. The wood from the tree has been saved and may be used in commemorative items in the future.

The plans before the Board were developed by a small committee that included Town Supervisor Bill Smith, Village Mayor Robert Corby, Landscape Architect Doug McCord. Mr. McCord designed the landscaping along the canal at Schoen Place and other projects in the Village. The Town has also received input from the Pittsford Garden Club, and members of the public.

Member Vlietstra thanked Mr. Schenkel for referring the plans.

Mr. Schenkel introduced the plans. Based on input from many it was decided that one tree should be the prominent focal point on the site. Another important design aspect is to incorporate native species in its design. A white oak was chosen to be the focal point of the park and it will grow to be an impressive tree in

time. Another Beech tree is not recommended because of the risk of re-infection. It will take a long time for the oak to reach a large size. They are starting with the largest tree they can obtain which will be about 20ft high and have a 5-inch trunk circumference. Oaks have a large tap-root and cannot be transplanted once they exceed a certain size. A tree has been purchased by the Town but it looks like it cannot be planted until the fall. Smaller trees are also being planted on the site and they are intended to fill in the space until the oak tree grows. These small trees include a dogwood, paperbark maple, and redbud. The street frontage is bare so three European Hornbeams are proposed as street trees and the yews will be removed. Additional shrubs will be planted including lilac, roses, and a hedgerow of arborvitae to screen the park from the adjacent parking lot. Many members of the public have commented that they prefer the appearance of the park without the fence. Mayor Corby requested the arborvitae in place of a fence.

Members of the Board discussed opinions on the plans. The Board had very favorable opinions of new trees: white oak, dogwood, paperbark maple, and redbud. Lilacs are also a nice addition. Concerns over the arborvitae hedge were raised. They are not salt tolerant, they are planted on the northern edge of the site and don't grow well in shade, and grow unsightly as they age. A large planting of the same species is unattractive and difficult to maintain when one dies. Arborvitae hedges that screen other parking lots in the Village have died or become unattractive.

Mr. Schenkel said the Town intends to prune the trees to keep them small, about 6ft, and they plow the snow elsewhere into a large pile in the parking lot. Salt damage is not a concern. Shade is not a concern at the site until the trees grow. Deciduous trees or shrubs could be used but they would leave little screening of the parking lot in the winter. The strip between the walkways in the park and the parking lot is narrow and contains a hill so there is not a lot of room to plant shrubs that can provide screening.

Members made a few suggestions to consider in place of the arborvitae hedge:

- Mixed plantings would present a more attractive and varied appearance.
- Replacing some of the knockout roses with larger shrub roses would add attractive screening in the summer. The rugosa roses at schoen place are popular and form thick hedges. Larger varieties of these roses exist that could better screen a parking lot.
- A split rail fence with roses or vines along it would add nice rustic charm reminiscent of Pittsford's history. Such a fence would still allow a sense of space by being able to see into the parking lot.

Members also discussed the new street trees. The street is barren in the vicinity of the park and street trees are a much needed addition. Trees are preferable to flowerbeds or small shrubs in this location.

Mr. Schenkel mentioned other changes at the park include new metal park benches and bollard lights.

Member Vlietstra stated that he likes the addition of bollard lights but these particular lights do not appear to comply with code. Village code requires dark-sky compliant lights that shine down where the light source is not visible. There are many options for compliant bollards. The manufacturer also seems to only offer blue-white light color. The Board asks all applicants to use warm white lighting with a color of 2700K – 3000K. The Dark Sky association and the American Medical association both recommend all exterior lighting be 3000K or under because of scientific evidence that blue-white light over 3000K is harmful to health and wildlife. Most lighting manufacturers offer LED lights in several color options that usually include 2700K – 3000K.

Mr. Schenkel said he would consider the lighting suggestions and also mentioned that the Town will look to add receptacles to the bollards for use by the public.

Motion: Member Stetzer made a motion, seconded by Member Shannon, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Vote: Shannon - yes; Vlietstra – yes; Lhota-yes; Stetzer – yes. *Motion carried.*

Justin Vlietstra,