

The VGC has undertaken a year-long, thoughtful process of assessing trees on the Common with great consideration for planning for 50 years in the future. Understanding that these are serious decisions, we have consulted with professionals who have provided assessment and guidance to the committee as we contemplate the path forward.

1. The VGC consulted with then **Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Forester, Ethan Belair**, who visited the Common and assessed the existing trees. His complete review was submitted to the select board September 2019. Main points were:

The trees have varying degrees of damage and as a group are generally unhealthy.

He recommended consulting an arborist for the younger trees.

He attributed the poor performance of current trees, particularly the sugar maples, to poor soil, root damage from vehicles, increased traffic (from the time they were planted), road salt and the inability of roots to expand toward the road.

He suggested we consider species better suited to poor soils and roadside conditions including oaks.

He recommended planting for diversity and considering species beneficial to wildlife.

2. We hired **Dan Tremblay, ISA Certified Arborist NE-0165A, of Broad Oak Tree & Shrub Care** to assess mainly our newer Red Maples.

He pointed out that the oldest sugar maples near the road were “not assets” and the adjacent sugar maples were not long term trees.

He recommended how and when pruning should be done on younger trees to train them for structural strength, to reduce risk and increase longevity.

He recommended soil tests, compost and mulching.

We discussed adding species diversity.

3. Soil tests were conducted. Full results and reviews mentioned above were all submitted to the board at the September 2019 meeting when the removal of three trees was approved.

4. After much consideration, the VGC has reached consensus on two replacement trees, one **Princeton Elm** and one **Scarlet Oak**. These species are native to NH and well-suited to the soils and conditions present on the Common. The Princeton Elm has demonstrated good resistance to Dutch Elm Disease, tolerates a variety of soils and road salt and is recommended as a “street tree”. The Scarlet Oak also tolerates a range of soils and drought. We like the brilliant red fall color and leaves with deep sinuses. The leaf shape complements that of the Princeton Elm. The addition of these trees increases species diversity, one of our identified goals.

5. Trees that were suggested and considered but not agreed on include:

conifers (highly recommended by Ethan Belair)

Thornless Honey Locust (overplanted as a “parking lot tree”)

Sugar Maple (climate change is pushing the range north, will not thrive in Common soil and conditions)

River Birch (potentially short lived)

Sargent Cherry (we expect to plant a flowering tree in front of the Liberty Elm where the firehouse once stood)

Swamp White Oak (name is a misnomer as it will tolerate conditions on the Common, has an interesting leaf but fall color is less brilliant than Scarlet Oak)

The Village Green Committee is requesting that Select Board approve our tree choices taking into consideration the lengthy and comprehensive research and preparation completed by the committee.

Thank-you.

Carol Mamczak, VGC Secretary