

VT Urban and Community forestry Program Advisory Council

Subcommittee on Advancing Arboriculture

March 10<sup>th</sup> 2025 Meeting Minutes Draft

In attendance: Tim Smith, Joe, Mike Fallis, Scott Wunderle, Sarah Packer, Adam McCullough, Jeff Dube

No agenda for this meeting, just initially discussing options.

First we confirmed the structure of this subcommittee is to meet in March and September, while full Council meetings will occur in December and June.

The group agreed that there was a gap in Vermont for local training and CEU opportunities for arborists. The UCF conference is a useful resource for volunteers, but the audience is so different from the professional arborist crowd, that a separate event would be a better way to serve arborists needs. We spoke about how CEU's for arborists and other professions could be a way to compensate arborists for their time and effort in delivering free services to schools and municipalities throughout the state.

Mike noted that offering free services, or student focused training is difficult in terms of liability. Workers Comp covers liability for on the job training of arborists, but not for students. So who would the buck stop with if we offered youth programs and an accident occurred? Similarly, when consulting with a town, it is difficult to recommend keeping some trees that are more questionable, because in the event that it does fall and hurt someone, the liability for whoever assessed the tree as safe could be too great.

Adam had observed this challenge as well. But noted he wants to live in a world where a kid can climb a tree as part of their education. And where we can have larger trees as part of our urban forest.

Sarah proposed a safety message directed at preventing electrocution accidents during roadside mowing. And Adam tacked on an idea to include preventing "lawnmower blight" on trees in lawns using some form of training.

We all agreed that it could be an unpopular approach to enter into workplaces that are struggling to keep all their responsibilities, and "lecture " them about how to do their jobs. Tim noted that road crews tend to be so focused on making their workload manageable, that they didn't seem like the best audience for a training to advance tree care.

Jeff suggested a different approach to have municipal tree committees and towns in general to encourage them to consider tree placement more carefully during their design process. This could prevent unnecessary removals and maintenance of trees that were simply planted in the wrong place. The group agreed that there have been several VTrans projects that misplaced some trees as well as commonly seeing taller tree species planted under power lines. This would be in line with the Right Tree Right Place initiative that has been successful.

We considered another target audience of state agencies, but felt that we had partnerships underway in this space already and could focus elsewhere.

We shifted to speak about what message we wanted to deliver. Rather than deciding on what audience to target. We considered Safety messaging around electrocution and mowing, right tree right place, proper mulching around trees, and how to get more bang for your buck as a municipality doing tree care, A tree ID course for various audiences like new hires at tree services, promoting the value of the benefits of trees. We considered Tree Wardens, Schools, Grant recipients, Landscapers, as potential audiences for these messages.

Ultimately we settled on the idea of an Arborist Day of Service.

Overview of the event:

1 day of service at a location that can benefit from a significant amount of tree care such as, school, state park, or the state house.

Invite businesses from all over the state to participate, and send a crew to get together, and get a lot of work done, and meet up.

The work would be centrally coordinated with a map and tree care specs, probably produced by Adam, then assigned out in an organized way to the tree crews in attendance.

News outlets would be invited.

Goals of the Event: Provide a much needed service in a location that otherwise wouldn't get the tree work done, and may have resulted in removals or neglect without the assistance. Good feelings for everyone involved. Crews seeing each other's techniques and equipment in order to learn from each other. Gathering Tree Care professionals together for a short training each year. Promoting all these businesses in the media. Promoting the profession to those who might not have known it existed as a method of workforce development. **The beginning of a professional arborist association in Vermont.**

Tasks: Adam will find a worksite location and coordinate a date. (entice participants with state park passes?) Adz will also map the area and create the specifications for the work. And will coordinate with UCF team to do some kind of registration on our website.

Scott will produce a brochure to enlist volunteer arborists.

Jeff will work on the graphics for a tee shirt and other materials, perhaps the map of the worksite.

Tim will direct us to the Massachusetts arborist association and their very similar event to prevent us from re-inventing the wheel.

Additional tasks not yet assigned: Food coordination, Gathering place in the center of the worksite with table, pop-up tent, etc. Design and Order Tee shirts. Reach out to companies to ask for volunteers. Invite media. Gather and bring extra PPE. And probably a lot more.