

## Keene Public Library

### Building and Grounds Committee

Meeting held 4/12/2024 at 2:00 PM

Members present: Susan Bloom, Paul Henkel, Justin Somma, and Marti Fiske. Kathleen Packard and Sally Rinehart

Minutes of our last meeting were approved.

**Maintenance** - Brian is finishing up repairing and painting the louvered shutters in the Miller-Vincent Room. The completed ones work more easily and look nice.

Brickwork on the Winter Street side was repaired.

**New AV Equipment** – A podium for Cohen Hall was received and assembled and is ready for use.

A Karaoke machine was purchased. Sally Rinehart reported that it was recently used at a 5K race at the airport, and it worked well.

The *Library of Things* has many happy borrowers. The meeting rooms are being extensively reserved for activities initiated by the public.

**Acoustic Improvement of Cohen Hall and of the Main Lobby where the Circulation Desk is located** – Marti Fiske reported the Library has contracted Eric Reuter to do the acoustical evaluation. He plans to visit on April 23 at 8 AM. The work will include an echo test which is best carried out without the public in the building.

**Landscaping/Tree Identification**– Tree Identification at Keene Public Library involved several contributors and a series of steps. Paul Henkel identified URLs of wiki sites describing the trees, which were then shortened and transformed into QR codes. Isaiah Dokus, a staff member, utilized our Maker Space to laser etch tree tags. Arborist Bud Winsor, with 27 years of experience managing KSC grounds, expertly mounted these tags onto the trees.

Paul delved into researching information about the Library's trees and drafted individual bookmarks for each of the twelve distinct trees. During this process, a 2008 report surfaced, shedding further light on the subject. Katelyn McStravick skillfully formatted the bookmarks, enhancing them with appealing artwork.

Justin Somma's innovative idea of a bookmark rack was met with enthusiasm. Trustees generously donated \$10 each, resulting in the purchase of a dedicated rack. Finally, the culmination of efforts—tree tags, bookmarks, and the rack—was graciously donated to the Library by both Trustees and Staff. This collective gesture serves as a commemorative gift, honoring the 125th year of the Keene Public Library's presence in the Thayer Building.

Paul Henkel, Chair

**Schedule for next meetings: TBD**

**KEENE LIBRARY LANDSCAPE TREES**  
OBSERVATIONS 11/05/08 BY J.W. NUTE & STEVE ROBERGE  
UNH COOP. EXT. FORESTERS

There are 4 trees on the front lawn of the library. Going east to west, they are a 5" trunk diameter beech, a 35.5" trunk diameter scarlet oak, a 54.5" trunk diameter red oak and a 4" trunk diameter weeping crab apple. They are all in good health, with no trunk wounds or basal decay, have good form and are well suited to the site. However, about 10 years ago, construction activity raised the soil level around most of the roots of the red oak and a brick and mortar well was installed around the trunk. Also, from 2000 to 2004, we had a severe drought. Finally, foot traffic across the lawn has compacted the soil. All of this has contributed to branch dieback of some of the smaller limbs of the red oak and raised questions how to maintain the health of the trees.

High School teacher John Mitchell and his class have done an excellent job evaluating the trees and made recommendations and we generally agree with them. Our specific recommendations are:

1. Prune out the dead limbs in the crown of both the scarlet and red oak. This "maintenance pruning" of these mature trees should be done routinely every 10 years. No wound dressing is needed on these limb cuts. No cabling is needed to support the large limbs.
2. Use an "air spade" to excavate the compacted soil in a spoke pattern from the trunks of both trees across the lawn. The excavated "spokes" should be 2' wide and 1' deep. Remove most of this soil and replace with organic loam or compost. The intent is to treat about half the surface of the lawn in this fashion. Rather than reseed the spoke areas to re-establish the lawn, use sod. There is no need to amend with mycorrhizae fungus, or inject liquid fertilizer into the soil, as the improvements provided by the loam and compost are sufficient.
3. To prevent future soil compaction of the lawn, install a white picket fence inside the sidewalk perimeter. This will match the white trim of the brick library and suggest the rural New England character of the town. Dig the fence post holes by hand to limit damage to any major roots. A living hedge would be nice, but simply would not stand up to the high maintenance needs of the site and the public tendency to create gaps through it to continue to walk across the lawn. The fence can be set back from the sidewalk 3' or 4' to facilitate snow removal from the sidewalks. There is a concern about using salt to keep these shaded sidewalks clear of ice in the winter. An alternative is to use calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), which is not harmful to vegetation and is also less damaging to concrete. It is more expensive (\$700/ton) than salt (\$50/ton), but for this small application, should not be prohibitive.
4. Leave the brick and mortar well around the red oak as is. This is maintaining a 2' clearance around the tree trunk, and that is sufficient. In the future, if the growing tree roots ever heave or crack the well, it can be removed and replaced with a dry stone retaining wall, level with the ground.
5. Pull back the mulch from around the trunks of the beech and crab apple trees, and keep it level with the ground.

END