Board of Selectmen  
Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at 8:00 a.m.  
Remote via Zoom - ONLY  

**Meeting Minutes**

8:00 a.m. Regular Session

First Selectwoman Lyons called the Regular Session of Tuesday, November 8, 2022 to order at 5:30 p.m. Also, in attendance: Selectman Goldberg, Selectwoman Kokoruda, Selectman Murphy and Selectman Wilson.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance.**

   First Selectwoman Lyons led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **First Selectwoman’s Updates.**

   First Selectwoman Lyons reminded the public that today is Election Day. Contact the Town Clerk regarding cut off for absentee ballots and same-day registration.

3. **Liaison Reports/Selectmen Comments.**

   None.

4. **Citizen comments.**

   Fran Brady, 108 Genesee Lane: felt the town should insist on the replacement of each mature tree cut down with at least three new trees somewhere in an appropriate designated location either on that site or within the town, at the expense of the entity cutting the tree.

**Business**

1. **Consent Agenda:**

   MOVED by Selectman Murphy and seconded by Selectman Wilson to approve the Items of the Consent agenda as follows, with the removal of item a:

   c. Appointment of Judith Hessian, Capital Improvement Program Committee, Board of Selectmen, Public  

   VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

2. **Discuss and take action to award the Request for Proposal for Professional Design Services for Town Hall HVAC Modernization to ICDS, LLS in the amount of $49,560.00 and to authorize the First Selectwoman to sign all contracts and documents associated with this**
award; approved through the Capital Improvement Program

MOVED by Selectman Murphy and seconded by Selectman Wilson to award the Request for Proposal for Professional Design Services for Town Hall HVAC Modernization to ICDS, LLS in the amount of $49,560.00 and to authorize the First Selectwoman to sign all contracts and documents associated with this award; approved through the Capital Improvement Program.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

3. Discussion of Eversource Resiliency Program by Eversource

(Public correspondence from Madison residents attached).

Eversource representatives were present to discuss the Resiliency Program. First Selectwoman Lyons explained that Eversource visited the towns Tree Warden and other town staff in August 2022 to discuss the pilot program that focuses on specific geographic areas in the state where an outage effects a large number of customers; on area identified in Madison was River Road. Eversource spoke with homeowners to solicit approval to remove certain trees, as well as getting approval from the town for trees that were in the towns right of way. In October 2022, Eversource began tagging trees and during this process the town heard a lot of feedback from neighbors on River Road and in the area as to the large number of trees tagged. Since that time the town has had several meetings with Eversource to discuss the program and First Selectwoman Lyons felt it was important that Eversource present to the board the objective of this program and process/procedure moving forward.

Eversource presented their Vegetation Management presentation (attached). 90% of outages during storms are caused by trees. Trees that come down in storms may also block roads, creating a public safety issue. More frequent, severe weather continues to be a challenge to the way Eversource provides electricity to the communities, businesses and homes served. The programs remain an effective method of ensuring safe and reliable power for Customers. Addressing the tree problem in CT is a shared responsibility and Eversource wants to continue to be a good partner and neighbor. Their ability to manage trees near the wires is dependent on securing the permission of individual homeowners and local tree wardens. A single homeowner’s resistance to tree work on our backbone network can negate tree work completed in town and other communities. Eversource presented the 2022 planned Maintenance Trimming map for the town of Madison.

A new data-driven approach to targeted tree removals to improve reliability and resiliency for customers, the goal is to improve service for customers both day-to-day and during large storm events. Selection process for determining the Worst Performing Devices: Eversource evaluated Device Protection Zone segments within circuits state wide: 3 years of tree-caused outages from 2019-202, includes storm and non-storm outages. Improving resiliency requires removal of hazardous and non-hazardous trees in the public right-of-way and on private property.

The identified route in Madison is Mill Street and River Road, approximately 1.54 miles.
Tall growing trees within 10 feet of outermost wires will be removed to prevent future grow-ins. To increase resiliency, Eversource will also target risk trees within the fall zone. Risk trees are those that can fall on or contact power lines and cause an outage. Professional arborists will evaluate all trees within the Fall Zone to determine a tree’s risk potential based on its species, location, health, and structural composition and prioritize the removal of risk trees to minimize their ability to cause an outage. If a tree must be removed, it is cut as low to the ground as possible.

A qualified permission specialist will be going door to door to talk with each property owners along the segment. Following state statutes and regulations, notification and a town permit is required for tree work in the town right-of-way. Before tree work can be performed on private property, Eversource must obtain consent from the property owner. Trees removed as part of this project may be supplemented with vegetation that is compatible with overhead lines. An Eversource Arborist will collaborate with property owners to develop a replanting plan. Wildlife and pollinator habitat, incorporation of low-growth native species, invasive species abatement, stump grinding, and storm pruning for historic town trees.

Selectman Murphy asked how many trees have been determined by homeowners to be removed and noted he is struggling with the removal of healthy trees within the 10ft fall area. Sean Redding (Eversource) responded the number was nearing 300, but noted this was not a final number.

Selectwoman Kokoruda explained she was surprised this area was chosen by Eversource; it is the last to lose power and the first to get it back. It does not seem this area is impacted by the storms compared to the calls the town receives of power outages in the north Madison area. Sean Redding (Eversource) responded this area is a backbone line, it is part of the main lines that comes out of the substation serving parts of both Madison and Clinton. Because it serves so many customer, Eversource prioritizes this area during major storms. He noted this area can also be controlled automatically or remotely from a control center.

Selectman Wilson asked if these worst performing areas can be targeted for strategic line burial. Sean Redding (Eversource) noted standard construction is overhead, any new development would be underground and the cost is bared by the developer. But it is very costly to convert from overhead to underground and each property would have to pay to connect to the new system.

Selectman Goldberg asked for clarity on Eversource’s responsibility in picking up the cost for homeowners. Sean Redding (Eversource) responded Eversource is covering the cost of tree work completed (after its been agreed upon with homeowner or town), and is also offering to pay for the cost of replanting a compatible species and stump grinding. It is the homeowner’s responsibility after planting, to water appropriately. Typically, Eversource will replace a tree that dies in the first growing season.

First Selectwoman Lyons noted the fall zone and that many residents expressed feedback that Eversource is digging too deep into properties thus capturing more trees/trees that have the
potential to fall. She added that homeowners can request more information from Eversource to discuss hazards and health of the trees. Sean Redding (Eversource) reiterated that 90% of outages are caused by trees impacting the lines, 70% of outages come from outside the trim zone and trees that look healthy can still fall when the conditions are wrong. Eversource has a face-to-face meet with homeowners to go over proposed trees to be removed, what type, its condition (diseased, hazard etc.) and the homeowners have full ability to agree or not to what Eversource proposes. Homeowners have the ability to change their mind before any work is done.

Craig Taylor, town Tree Warden, determined there are 77 trees on town property that were flagged by Eversource. He felt (57) should remain as they are healthy trees, (12) will be posted, and (8) are deemed hazardous and will be removed.

The town will hold a Public Hearing with Eversource to allow residents to comment on the proposed tree removals in the town right-of-way only (not trees on private property). Communication will be sent out through the towns alert system to residents in this area.

MOVED by First Selectwoman Lyons and seconded by Selectman Murphy to open the agenda to add 3a: Set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Town Campus Room A and Remotely via Zoom to hear comments on: Proposed Tree Removals in Town right-of-way as a result of the Eversource Resiliency Process.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

a. Set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Town Campus Room A and Remotely via Zoom to hear comments on: Proposed Tree Removals in Town right-of-way as a result of the Eversource Resiliency Process.

MOVED by First Selectwoman Lyons and seconded by Selectman Murphy to Set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Town Campus Room A and Remotely via Zoom to hear comments on: Proposed Tree Removals in Town right-of-way as a result of the Eversource Resiliency Process.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

4. Update on proposed bond issuance by Bond Advisor, Bill Lindsay

Bill Lindsay, Bond Advisor with Munistat, was present to discuss the financing plan to fund future projects. He spoke about a plan of series of bonding to help phase the impact of the 4 major projects, all which have different construction schedules. The process will start this fall using short term bond anticipation notes in accordance with the plan that was presented to the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance. A total of $8.2 million will be borrowed to cover all 4 projects. There will be a public sale of notes in November 2022 and the town should have the funds in December 2022. B. Lindsay shared slides. The town has a plan for phasing the impact into the budget moving forward.

5. Discuss and take action to enter into a contract with Collier’s Project Leaders for Project Management Services at Academy Community Center and to authorize the First
Selectwoman to sign all contracts and documents associated with this award.

MOVED by Selectman Wilson and seconded by Selectman Goldberg to enter into a contract with Collier’s Project Leaders for Project Management Services at Academy Community Center and to authorize the First Selectwoman to sign all contracts and documents associated with this award.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.


The board discussed that current practice for unaffiliated voters; one member of each party interviews the candidate and makes a recommendation to the board. Further ideas include involving the board/committee chair in the interview process. The board will continue this conversation at a later meeting.

7. Discuss and take action to approve the 2023 Meeting Schedule

MOVED by Selectwoman Kokoruda and seconded by Selectman Wilson to approve the 2023 Meeting Schedule as presented.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

8. Discuss and take action to approve the 2023 Budget Workshop Schedule

MOVED by Selectman Murphy and seconded by Selectman Wilson to approve the 2023 Budget Workshop Schedule as presented.

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

9. Citizen comments.

Francis Brady, 108 Genesee Lane: noted his positive experience going through the interview process as an Unaffiliated voter and felt senior staff and/or board/committee chairs should also be involved.

10. Adjournment.

There being no objection the Board adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaclyn Lehet
Dear Madison Board of Selectmen and Mr. Taylor,

We’ve recently learned from our neighbors that Eversource is actively arranging to remove all trees within 100 feet of either side of Mill and River road up to Scotland, irrespective of the health of the trees or the risk they present to power lines. We have also been astonished to learn that Eversource has already cut and then abandoned trees belonging to our neighborhood association (Strathmore Farms) without the knowledge or consent of our board. We understand that over 300 trees have been tagged for removal so far, and that the town of Madison has not been aware of this process.

We urgently need the engagement of Madison’s leadership to stop Eversource from such destructive clear cutting in our beautiful community. We appreciate the need to trim and remove trees to protect the reliability of the power grid, and the increased efforts in this regard since Hurricane Sandy, but this type of clear cutting, especially near a river, would be a scenic and environmental disaster.

The lack of communication from Eversource, and the very subtle tagging of the trees, suggests that Eversource is trying to sneak this past the community. Our board President has not had her phone calls returned to discuss disposal of the trees that Eversource has already felled on our property.

We have copied our representatives in Hartford so they are aware that the rate increases the State has approved for tree management are being applied so inappropriately. We have also copied Cindy Horan, the President of the Strathmore Farms board.

Thank you in advance for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gerry and Kathy Aubrey
22 Kingsbridge Way
Madison
Hello

I have been informed by neighbors that Eversource has met with several property owners along River and Mill roads to discuss the possible cutting of trees that could potentially endanger power lines. Apparently, Eversource has offered to cut down and remove tree trunks of any trees within 100 feet of the power lines, even if such trees do not present any near term danger to the power lines. We have observed that there are more than 300 trees in our area that have been tagged for removal.

I have no issue with removal of trees that do indeed endanger the power lines. However the removal of healthy trees which do not threaten the power lines will make the area much less attractive, present environmental risk and cost Eversource customers a considerable amount of money (perhaps well over $500,000).

I strongly oppose removal of healthy trees that do not threaten the power lines, and I hope the Board of Selectman can review this important matter.

John Gontero
17 Longview Terrace
Madison
203-676-5484
Dear Board,

I live on Longview Terrace and am on the Board of Directors of the Strathmore Farms Association which owns more than 20 acres along River Road. (I write as an individual property owner and am not representing the Association in this email.)

Last week I learned that Eversource will remove more than 300 trees along Mill and River Roads. I know from several conversations with Kyle Sheehan, a representative of Lucas Tree, the contractor for Eversource, that Eversource has offered to cut down any trees within 100 feet of the power line whether or not the trees are diseased and thus whether or not the trees threaten the power line. Property owners only have to suggest which trees are to be removed and they will receive free tree and stump removal. Obviously, removing trees that threaten power lines is necessary since Eversource is unlikely to prune them. But removing healthy trees will denigrate the landscape along the road, harm the environment and inevitably raise people’s electric bills.

According to the DEEP website, the land along town roads such as River and Mill Roads is controlled by town. I understand that the Town cannot prohibit tree cutting on private lands (except for special circumstances such as a coastal area) but surely Madison could assess the health of the trees in the Town regulated area along River and Mill Roads. As a property owner (and tax payer), I have received no notice from the Town. I am on the Town and First Selectwoman’s email lists but, as far as I know, neither has informed us about the tree cutting. Why are we informed by Eversource and not by the Town? Why has the Tree Warden not become involved in this project? Why isn’t someone in Town government working to prevent destruction of healthy trees? Would the Town allow Eversource to preempt the Town’s role along the Madison Green or along the streets of the historic district?

About six weeks ago, without any notice, Eversource cut down several trees on our property along River Road and left the cut trees in our meadow. I have asked about the reasons for this tree removal and have asked that Eversource remove the limbs littering our property. I have received no response. This experience leads me to wonder whether Eversource will, in fact, clean up after tree removal.

I encourage each of you to drive along River and Mill Roads to see how many trees are tagged. Many of these are old maples. Removal of them will dramatically change this area for good.

I strongly oppose removal of healthy trees along River and Mill Roads.

Cynthia Horan
15 Longview Terrace
Dear Peggy,

I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus of concern regarding the possibility of the wholesale removal of 300 trees + _ along River road.

These trees represent hundreds/thousands years of growth and are essentially irreplaceable. I’m also concerned there seems to be no formal process for allowing such an event to take place.

Your commitment to review/update the complaints is much appreciated. I and your constituents look forward to your findings.

Respectfully,

Lewis Ludlow
2 Longview Terrace
Madison, Ct 06443
lludlow@me.com
203-779-945
Agenda

- Connecticut’s Tree Issue
  - Trees and Powerlines Don’t Mix
  - Connecticut's Tree Issue
- Data-driven Vegetation Management
  - Worst Performing Devices
  - Scope of Work
  - Segment Route
  - Clearance and Permission Process
- Timeline
  - Customer Outreach
Trees and Powerlines Don’t Mix

- 90% of outages during storms are caused by trees
- Trees that come down in storms may also block roads, creating a public safety issue
- More frequent, severe weather continues to be a challenge to the way we provide electricity to the communities, businesses and homes we serve
- Our programs remain an effective method of ensuring safe and reliable power for our customers
Connecticut’s Tree Issue

- Addressing the tree problem in CT is a shared responsibility and we want to continue to be a good partner and neighbor.

- Our ability to manage trees near our wires is dependent on securing the permission of individual homeowners and local tree wardens.

- A single homeowner’s resistance to tree work on our backbone network can negate tree work completed in your town and other communities.
Data-driven Vegetation Management
**Worst Performing Devices** | **Approach**

- A new data-driven approach to targeted tree removals to improve reliability and resiliency for customers
- Goal is to improve service for customers both day-to-day and during large storm events
Selection process for determining the Worst Performing Devices:

- Eversource evaluated Device Protection Zone segments within circuits state wide:
  - 3 years of tree-caused outages
    - 2019-2021
  - Includes storm and non-storm outages

Improving resiliency requires removal of hazardous and non-hazardous trees in the public right-of-way and on private property
Segment Route

- Circuit 30R9
- Starts in Clinton
- Ends in Madison
- Totals 1.54 miles
  - Mill St
  - River Rd

- Work will be conducted within the road rights-of-way in coordination with the town tree warden
Eversource Clearance

- Tall growing trees within 10 feet of outermost wires will be removed to prevent future grow-ins. To increase resiliency, we will also target risk trees within the fall zone. Risk trees are those that can fall on or contact power lines and cause an outage. Our professional arborists will evaluate all trees within the Fall Zone to determine a tree’s risk potential based on its species, location, health, and structural composition and prioritize the removal of risk trees to minimize their ability to cause an outage. If a tree must be removed, it is cut as low to the ground as possible.
Segment Snapshot
Recloser, River Rd

- **3.2K**
  Total customers impacted by device

- **1.5 miles**
  Total length

- **Customer Interruptions**
  Past 3 years
  - 3.0 thousand customers
  - 12.4 million minutes

- **Outages Events in the**
  Past 3 years
  - 3
Property Owner Consent

- A qualified permission specialist will be going door to door to talk with each property owner along the segment

- Following state statutes and regulations, notification and a town permit is required for tree work in the town right-of-way

- Before tree work can be performed on private property, we must obtain consent from the property owner
Environmental Impact

- Trees removed as part of this project may be supplemented with vegetation that is compatible with overhead lines.
- An Eversource Arborist will collaborate with property owners to develop a replanting plan.
- Wildlife and pollinator habitat, incorporation of low-growth native species, invasive species abatement, stump grinding, and storm pruning for historic town trees.
Plantings | Right Tree, Right Place and Pollinators

Eversource’s Recommended 30 Trees Under 30 Feet Tall

Pollinator-friendly Plants
Project Timeline

2022-2023 Project Timeline

SUMMER/FALL
- Customer Outreach and Permissions
- Tree Warden Meeting and Town Review

FALL
- Tree contractors begin tree trimming and removals on segment

SPRING
- Plantings/Stump Grinding
- On-going monitoring of reliability and resiliency improvements
Questions?