

PLANNING BOARD

Rules and Regulations Governing Scenic Roads

in the Town of Petersham

I Purpose

The Scenic Roads Law governs the cutting and removal of trees and stonewalls during repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving of roads by any agency for the purpose of providing protection to the environmental, aesthetic and historical values of a town's roads. It is planned to develop a growth of shade trees along Petersham's scenic roads to reduce the growth of underbrush and thus the cost of roadside maintenance.

II Authority

Under the general authority vested in the Planning Board of the Town of Petersham by section 15C of Chapter 40 of the General Laws and specifically by the voters of Petersham at Town Meetings dated December 3, 1973, article 3 and May 6, 1974, article 1, wherein the roads listed below within the town were designated "Scenic Roads". In exercising it's responsibilities the Planning Board was instructed to take into consideration sound planning principles, aesthetics, the preservation of natural resources, and public safety.

- Amidon Drive, Baldwin Drive, Birch Hill Drive, Briggs Road, Camels Hump Road, Carberry Lane, Carter Pond Road, Choate Drive, Church Road, Common Street (West Side), Conyonker Road, Craft Center Cut-Off, Doe Valley Road, Dugway Road, French Road, Gay Drive, Glasheen Road, Glen Valley Road, Hall Road, Hammond Road, Hardwick Road (from Rt. 122 to West St.), Harty Drive, Leighton Road, Loring Hill Road, Maple Lane, Narrow Lane, Nelson Road, New Salem Road, Nichewaug Road, Old Hardwick Road, Oliver Street, Pat Connor Road, Phillips Drive, Pierce Road, Poor Farm Road, Prospect Hill Road, Quaker Drive, Russell Road, Shaw Road, South Street, Spring Street, Sunset Lane, Tom Swamp Road, Turnpike Road, West Street, Woodward Road.

III General Objectives

These tentative regulations have been adopted by the Planning Board working jointly with the Conservation Commission, the Selectmen, the Tree Warden, and the Superintendent of Streets. They will be changed or amplified as experience determines.

This first set of regulations is intended to apply specifically to black top roads but until a further classification of all town roads is developed, these guides shall be applied to all roads.

On scenic roads roadside vegetation will generally be managed, to develop shade trees of long-lived species which, when mature, will stand 25 to 30 feet apart along both sides of the road. There will be a cleared shoulder on each side of the road which is about 4 feet wide. A wider strip may be needed on designated corners and near intersections to provide adequate visibility.

IV Action Requiring Public Hearing and Planning Board Approval.

A. For Tree Removal

When the Superintendent of Streets believes it is necessary to cut or remove a tree on any scenic Road that is 6 inches in diameter at breast height (d.b.h.) or larger standing within 4 feet from the road surface, or a tree that is 3 inches in d.b.h. or larger standing beyond 4 feet from the road surface but still within the right of way, written consent of the Planning Board is required after a public hearing duly advertised twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area as to time, date, place and purpose, the last publication to occur at least seven days prior to such hearing.

Approval of the Tree Warden under the Shade Tree Act is also required, so the Planning Board and the Tree Warden will conduct one public hearing to cover both the Scenic Roads and the Shade Tree Acts.

B. For Stone Wall Removal.

The Superintendent of Streets shall obtain written consent of the Planning Board after a public hearing before he may remove any sections of stone walls along or within the right-of-way of any scenic road as part of the repair or improvement of that road except as allowed in Section V B below.

V Action Not Requiring Public Hearing and Planning Board Approval.

A. For Tree Removal

To promote the objectives in Section III above and/or if the Superintendent of Streets believes it is necessary for the safety and convenience of the public he may authorize cutting and removal of the following without a public hearing and Planning Board approval (again co-ordinating his actions where necessary with the Tree Warden in conformance with the Shade Tree Act).

1. Trees that are less than 6 inches in diameter breast high (d.b.h.), standing within 4 feet of the road surface.
2. Trees that are less than 3 inches in d.b.h. standing more than 4 feet from the road surface but still within the road right-of-way:
 - a. When these trees form an understory below an established overstory of shade trees, except that when a tree in the existing overstory becomes senile or unhealthy, then a replacement small tree will be saved from the understory to grow up and take the place of the old tree when it has to be removed.

- b. When there is no overstory and the removal of trees up to 3 inches in d.b.h. will release other small trees so they can grow more rapidly into large shade trees. These favored trees should be healthy and selected to be spaced about 12 to 15 feet apart and of preferred origin and species. 1]
 - c. Under utility poles that run along one side and close to the road, species that are saved will be those that are short statured when mature like buckthorn, or high bushes like blueberry, dogwood or sumac so that roadside vegetation will not grow up to interfere with the wires.
3. Branches can be pruned when they extend lower than 12 feet over the travelled way and over the 4 foot wide cleared shoulders. Pruning will be flush with the main trunk or next main fork to promote rapid healing.
 4. Any tree or branch that due to death, accident or damage becomes dangerous to the public can be cut without a public hearing or Planning Board approval.

B. For Stone Wall Removal

A public hearing and approval by the Planning Board are not required when in the opinion of the Superintendent of Streets the following action is warranted:

1. The rebuilding of a stone wall for purposes of upgrading or aesthetic improvement or relocation.
2. Removal or relocation of any section of stone wall up to 20 feet for a driveway or barway and up to 6 feet for a walkway.
3. Temporary removal to be replaced in the same or improved condition to blend with the area stone walls.

The Petersham Planning Board

George W. Bull, Jr. Chairman
Rosalie C. Fiske, Clerk
Roger L. Corey
William S. Modzeleski
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- 1] Trees of seedling origin are most desirable, a single stemmed sprout originating from near the root collar of a small stump comes next, the one best stem from a multiple-stemmed group comes next and finally the least desirable is a sprout from a large stump or one originating from high on the side of a stump. Long-lived deciduous trees such as maple, oak, beech, basswood and white birch without major pests are preferred first. Next come long-lived trees subject to high natural hazards like elm, black cherry and black birch. The least desirable trees are short-lived species like aspen and gray birch which will be saved only if there is nothing better available.