

Tree City USA status sought

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HANSON — Town Administrator Michael McCue is planting the seeds from which a Tree City USA designation for the town will grow — at least that's his aim in deliver-

ing the seeds.

"I have an affinity for trees," McCue said. "In my previous positions in other communities, one of my pet projects was to get towns named a Tree City USA."

McCue reported at the

Tuesday, July 19 Board of Selectmen's meeting that he has arranged for the town to receive seeds from among six Ginkgo biloba trees that survived the atomic bomb blast at Hiroshima, Japan on Aug. 6,

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1945. The seeds will be delivered to Hanson Middle School for grade eight science classes to plant.

That class of students will be asked to nurture the seedlings as they grow, until they graduate Whitman-Hanson Regional High School.

McCue has reached out to Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ruth Gilbert-Whitner and School Committee Chairman Bob Hayes to help set up the program with science classes.

McCue took possession of the seeds Friday, July 15, after they were quarantined, and they've been in his home refrigerator since.

"They can grow these seeds and add something of significance to the community," McCue said. The trees are meant to be a legacy gift to plant on the WHRHS grounds.

The seeds are from trees known in Japan as the Hibakujumoku — or survivor trees.

McCue came across the Ginkgo as a good candidate species when he worked in Avon, because the trees are extremely hardy, as evidenced by surviving Hiroshima.

He looked into the U.N.-sponsored program, Green Legacy Hiroshima, which annually collects seeds from the Hibakujumoku.

"I was able to obtain 12 saplings when I was still in Avon ... and have maintained a relationship with this organization," he said. "Unfortunately, the saplings I have control over and are still being cared for at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston — I've committed all of those."

That's where the seed program comes into play.

Six months ago, after learning the import restrictions had been tightened, he was able to obtain a shipment of the seeds.

In addition to the Ginkgo seeds, he will be getting seeds from the hackberry, jujube, a holly and camphor.

Besides the Ginkgo, species of the approximately 170 Hibakujumoku traceable to Hiroshima before the bombing by UNITAR's database also include weeping willow, black locust, Chinaberry, fig, bamboo, azalea, hemp palm, oleander, Japanese spindle, Kurogane holly, Japanese aralia, nettle tree, camphor tree, silverthorn, Japanese persimmon, eucalypt, giant pussy willow, southern catalpa, sago palm, tree peony, Shirodamo, cherry, crape myrtle, oriental pine, Chinese parasol tree, Japanese black pine, Muku tree, Japanese hackberry, ju-



This Ginkgo, situated near a temple about 1,130 meters away from the Hiroshima hypocenter, appeared to bud after the 1945 atomic blast (the temple itself was destroyed). In 1994 it was decided to leave it there and rebuild the temple around it, so now the main building has stairs in front divided into left-and right hand sides, protecting the Ginkgo inside this U-shape. kwarten.home

jube, Japanese flowering apricot, Amanatsu, Tabunoki, Bohdi tree, Japanese camellia, Japanese quince, Chinese juniper and crinum lily.

UNITAR is the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

BOSTON POST CANE

McCue is also working to revive the tradition of the Boston Post Cane, awarded to a community's oldest resident. He has presided over such programs in Mansfield and Avon — where he had to work with North Easton Savings Bank, which had started a program to replace missing Boston Post canes as a public service.

"Their [Avon] cane over the course of several decades went missing," he said.

Hanson's cane was also missing, but the bank has replaced it and the town clerk has determined the identity of the oldest resident. Replica canes also feature the engraving from the originals. Hanson's is now being engraved.

The cane program was founded by the defunct *Boston Post* newspaper in 1909 as a promotional project. Canes were made of ebony with gold grip and tip, for 700 towns in New England, including Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

No cities were included in the program, according to the Maynard town website, but some present day cities were still towns in 1909.

So long as that person agrees to participate in a ceremony, McCue said the board will be advised at a later date when it would take place.

"Some people aren't inter-



Detail from the town of Maynard's Boston Post Cane. Hanson, like Whitman did earlier this year, is reviving the tradition of awarding the cane to its oldest citizen. maynard.ma.us

ested in the attention," he said.

McCue is looking to affiliate with the Small Town Administrators' Group open to communities of 11,000 residents or fewer and is hoping to arrange one of the organization's annual meetings in town.

Tax bills due

Hanson residents are reminded that 2017 real estate bills are due Monday, Aug. 1, 2016.

WHITMAN KNIGHTS

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Whitman Council #: