

Jaclyn Norton

From: Helaine Dietz <info@email.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2022 8:54 PM
To: Jaclyn Norton
Subject: Yes on a Temporary Tree-Cutting Moratorium & Yes on the Councilors' Tree Protections

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Members of the Programs&Services Committee,

I am a Newton resident writing about the proposed changes to Newton's tree protection ordinance. I have witnessed tragic loss of trees on my street recently and over the last decade due to "improvements" such as mega-mansions which destroy nature in favor of over-construction. I attended a hearing to try to save trees on my street; however, the new owner who planned to destroy them prevailed.

I support the strongest protections for the most trees in Newton. I support the temporary moratorium while the ordinance changes are discussed and finalized. I also support the City-Council-proposed ordinance because it will strengthen protections for all trees 6-inches DBH (in diameter at breast height) and larger across all properties in Newton and it will also include an environmental mitigation payment for cutting healthy, mature trees that are not dangerous.

Cutting healthy, mature trees negatively impacts the local neighborhood, the city, and the region, as well as the global climate emergency. Cutting even a few trees affects the local heat index; neighborhood air pollution, storm water drainage, and road quality; and local public health. A few trees cut on many lots year after year—and often sale after sale—adds up to treeless blocks that become heat islands with less-manageable water run-off and faster deterioration of roads.

These effects cost the City of Newton money and thus the City's taxpayers—not just property owners but also people who rent, work, shop, dine, and do business in Newton. If individual property owners seek to cut mature, healthy, not-dangerous trees on their land, they should

have to make a climate mitigation payment to offset the monetary, environmental, and health costs to the community.

Like air and water, whether trees are properly stewarded will make or break a community. So Newton residents need to be notified when owners of nearby properties apply to cut healthy, not-dangerous trees. Local residents are most affected by tree-cutting, so we need to have the opportunity to speak in the permit review process and have opportunity to appeal to the City Councilors who live in our ward and know the local conditions.

I urge you to vote to enact a temporary moratorium and then to vote in favor the City-Council-proposed ordinance changes to require an environmental mitigation payment for cutting healthy, not-dangerous trees; to protect trees 6-inch-DBH and larger on all lots; and to give voice to the local people most impacted by tree cutting.

Sincerely,
Helaine W. Dietz

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