

## Jaclyn Norton

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**From:** Victoria Frothingham <victoria@treeboston.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 16, 2022 8:16 AM  
**To:** Jaclyn Norton  
**Subject:** A Heartfelt Yes on a Temporary Tree-Cutting Moratorium & the Councilors' Tree Protections

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Members of the Programs&Services Committee,

I am writing about the proposed changes to Newton's tree protection ordinance. Given the many environmental and public health benefits trees provide and the time it takes for a tree to grow to maturity, 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.

We should not cater to developers, who are in the business of degrading our neighborhoods in order to make big profits. (I realize you make like the increased tax revenues when developers build big houses, but such houses use more energy, contributing to climate change unless they use 100% renewable energy, and they raise property values such that most people cannot afford to live here, reducing the diversity of the city.)

I would go so far as to say we need to do more to encourage property owners to keep, and care for, their trees. To start, the city could conduct an educational campaign on the many benefits of trees, along with basic training about caring for trees. School curricula could include a unit on the important benefits of trees, especially in cities, tailored to different grade levels. The library could curate exhibits of photos of photos submitted by residents of their trees, accompanied by data on the environmental and public health benefits these trees provide. The city could highlight Arbor Day in April. And more.....

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.

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