

## **Urban Tree Commission – Friday, November 17, 2023 – Minutes**

Present: Marc Welch, Beth Wilkinson, Howard Birnbaum, Julia Malakie, Julie Winsett; guests Laura Petrillo, Melissa Brown

### **Forestry Update**

NUF has been doing all planting since last UTC meeting. Finishing up city sites, and will assist with Tree Conservancy planting on 11/18. City doing 490 trees including replacement of prior plantings. Tree Conservancy number in flux but will be about 125. Total fall planting will be over 600. A couple trees have disappeared; residents may have just taken them out. Marc is meeting with other departments (DPW, Public Buildings) to make sure they're aware of planting plans.

Will transition Elliot St yard to winter activity. Not enough room at Elliot St for all equipment to be stored there. Coming up is street tree pruning work and park projects.

Vacancy in NUF has theoretically been filled; due to start in two weeks.

{Barbara Darnell joined meeting}

Q from Melissa: If someone takes a tree out is there a fine? Marc: Where they knew who did it, didn't fine. Very rare; one every few years deliberately pulled out, hard to distinguish from ones driven over.

Q from Melissa: What is rate of tree loss? Marc: Industry standard 10%, Newton 2-5%. Anything lost in first two years we replace right away. Julia: a few years ago, cumulative losses on NTC trees about 10% from all causes. Lately, species specific, red oaks recently and cherries this year due to early thaw/freeze. Marc: have not checked lately on how trees are doing at 3-year mark. Expects new staff member to do a lot of pruning on recently planted trees. Before Covid, Marc went through plantings since 2010 and about 5% were gone.

### **Removal requests**

One new request coming up.

Re Walnut St Newton Highland village center tree damage. Coca Cola truck was forced into different lane due to road construction work. Barbaa noted still no protection on street trees at site, and the street was opened up after the tree damage. Marc explained that was for different work.

### **Tree ordinance status**

Draft with Law Dept for review.

Melissa: From beginning there was requirement for counting trees, and tree plan and tree protection plan for everybody. Now, not requiring for exempt trees.

Marc: If Law Dept says he can still ask for information "on forms created by the Tree Warden" that's how he'll enforce it. 100-150 permits/year now could be 400 or more. Same amount of work to review an exemption permit as a tree permit. Will still get plans scribbled on paper. There won't be enough certified arborists.

Howard: Does zoning have any relation to trees? Marc: no, it's good that Tree Ordinance is separate from Zoning. Julia: lower open space requirement in proposed Multi-Residence Transit zone in Village Center zoning would leave less room for trees.

### **Minutes**

September Minutes sent by Liza. Barbara moved to approve, Julia seconded. Minutes approved August and October, plus November to be reviewed next month.

### **New business/questions**

Beth: Is School Dept part of meeting with department heads? Marc: yes, for new buildings. Covid trees (~220) were mostly on school grounds, and are mostly planted. Some will have to be moved, for example on the Burr School paths which work on fields will rearrange. Frankline School trees: Marc thinks most can be saved when new school construction starts. Some older, ~4 years old, but still small, and some have been replaced.

Minutes submitted by Julia Malakie