

## Urban Tree Commission July 2023 Minutes Meeting Recorded

Present: Howard Birnbaum, Barbara Darnell, Julia Malakie, Marc Welch, Beth Wilkinson,  
Guests: Melissa Brown, Laura Petrillo

May Minutes: Motioned BD, 2nd Howard Approval Unanimous

June Minutes: Motioned Howard, 2<sup>nd</sup> BD, Approval Unanimous

Next Meeting 15 September – No August meeting

### FORESTRY:

- Usual summer tasks: Customer service requests, Pruning, Tree removals, Watering
- Fall planting planning
- Staff: Still one vacancy, another staff member out due to injury NOT NUF-related.

### CITY TREE ORDINANCE:

- Programs & Services: June 28 hearing on the Citizen's petition was NAN (no action necessary)  
Committee agreed the strongest tree protection possible (?)  
August 16<sup>th</sup> – next version of the Ordinance will be discussed and public comment will be taken

#### -Commission Comments:

HB: Published an article on trees in Fig City News

Wondered about the Cost Structure of the ordinance's fees/fines

iTree metrics seem obsolete – does not fully include environmental benefits

General discussion: Does the proposed ordinance take pollution costs into account?

Is there a Federal organization that publishes the costs/benefits of trees so those figures could be used for Newton's ordinance fines/fees?

MW: A 'One for One' replacement value is the safest way of valuing trees according to the City Law Department

JM: The Law Department shouldn't be setting City policy

MB: Could Newton use Cambridge's model? That cost is twice that of Newton's.

MW: Cambridge uses contractual labor which is much higher cost than our in-house crew.

HB: iTree model does not fully include pollution costs, such as asthma and heat island effects.

JM: The presence of trees add to home value appreciation due to sound buffering, reduced energy costs, for example.

BW: The effects of removal fines disproportionately affects lower income residents

LP: the discussion should center on trees as enhancing the public good rather than characterizing the fees as "Penalizing"

MB: Ordinance should include “Environmental Value”, which is based on the Ordinance’s wording, which should include health impact. Cambridge’s model was also preferred because their fee/removal model is based on income.

HB: The NY Times Daily interviewed Phoenix’s “Heat Officer” who said people deliberately walk where there is shade from trees.

MB: In IL there is a state law prohibiting the removal of trees

MW: MA law is based on old Colonial law, which has a different approach to property.

ASH TREE:

JM wondered about the treatment of ash trees on McGrath. MW said the chemicals for treatment couldn’t be obtained in time for treatment, which should be May to mid-June.

MW: trees that leaf out later were really hurt by the freeze in May.

Tree Walk at City Hall August 17<sup>th</sup> 6pm!

Meeting ended at 8:40