

Urban Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes - Friday, March 15, 2019 City Hall, Rm 205

Present: Julia Malakie, Amy Sangiolo, Beth Wilkinson. Guests: Julie Winsett, Yasodhara Paruchuru.

Phase 3 Solar update

JM: Many solar sites won't have tree impacts after all. They're not pruning the big oak trees at the schools. Don't have to prune the yellowwood at Mason-Rice. Eversource pruning at Pleasant St parking lot. Everything except Library and Brown Middle School has been approved. Were going to try to vote on Library and Brown but did not actually include them in list of sites to be voted on. JM made Open Meeting Law complaint that state supported; state advised city not to vote on foreseeable items inadvertently left off agenda. After 40 minute debate, Council voted 14-8 to not risk violating the Open Meeting Law. Will vote on those sites at next meeting Monday (3/18). Brown MS also delayed over unexpected need to move flagpole. Was just voted on by School Committee an hour before City Council. Will cut tuliptree but Marc Welch confirmed no need to prune wide cherry tree, surprising given layout of canopy. Looks like they'll vote on Library site even though Library trustees do not yet have information they need to give final approval.

AS: city is really pushing Library because they lost Albemarle and Auburndale Cove. JM: those were going to be Macquarie sites not Ameresco sites, so Ameresco hasn't really lost any sites. JM: still unclear what the Library lot drainage plan will be. City Council will have to approve funding for parking lot work, may be \$500K.

Tab column

YP will be drafting column for Tab on what residents can do to help new city trees. Send ideas, e.g. keep weeded, mulched, keep away weed whackers, dogs. Timing: aim for May, after weeds have started growing.

Membership

Julie Winsett going to apply. Yasodhara has already applied. Seems like early morning is still the best time for meetings, and Friday best.

Docket item 77-19

Docketed by Jim Cote, Andreae Downs, Emily Norton. Discussion & review of tree ordinance. No info on when it might be taken up. Was prompted by removal of boundary trees for roof solar on a house, supposedly without okay of the homeowner getting the solar.

Other idea is significant tree ordinance, for trees like Church St beech. BW: if only a few trees, money to administer a significant tree ordinance might be better spent another way to help trees. Next Open Space Plan in 2020 will be important. We should have representation on it.

JW: would trees on shared property lines be less controversial. JM: Lexington calls them trees in the setback, but seems like they only protect those, and not trees in the middle of the lot. BW has heard it's not even that strong.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Julia Malakie