

Urban Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes - Friday, June 15, 2018

City Hall, Rm 205

Present: Jess Barton, Marc Welch, Barbara Smiley, Julie Malakie, Barbara Darnell, Beth Wilkinson, Amy Sangiolo, Guest: Michele Cruz

Forestry Department Update (MW)

- Spring planting season concluded with 214 trees planted (including Tree Conservancy trees but not some park trees)
- FY18 to date planted 806 trees (including approx 200 NTC trees) most since the late 1980s.
- Thru last week in FY18, 893 removals, now including small ones (30-40 newly planted that had to be replaced, but they also are counted in plantings), plus 119 trees lost in storms.
- June will see some park work in higher use areas, then transition to risk tree removal for most of summer. Contractor has already done some risk tree removals. Removals are down from past year. Then grinding stumps.
- Combination log truck/chip truck will ship in next month. Hopefully by October will have new bucket truck/chipper.
- One quick pass on risk trees, and will do another pass, and maybe a third pass.
- Last year was good growing year, and winter moth caterpillars have small to non-problem last two years, which may be reducing tree loss.
- March storms very significant. 2,400 downed limbs in FY18 to date (expect will be 2,500 by end of FY18), including 1,300 just in March.
- BAS question: when might we run out of places to plant trees? Answer: we are still going backwards, but less so. May turn corner this year, depending on removals. FY19 goal to plant 800 trees. Typical storm losses might be 60 trees. (Used to be about 100 when we had more trees).
- Will start marking fall planting spots in a few weeks. With increased plantings, need to start marking earlier.
- Did soft launch of people watering own trees, with 60-70 trees (70 was goal). Will check in fall to see what survival is.
- Plan going forward: big planting in fall, and smaller planting in spring, mostly people watering own trees.
- Now have about 800-900 sites to water every week, and four water trailers.
- Residents still have option to pay city to get tree faster. Cost for city to plant without watering is \$210. Watering doubles the price, so most people water themselves.
- Reviewing past 20 years of 1,300 planting requests. Light-duty tree crew person noted if there was tree there or not. 1,300 will probably drop by a third, since some spots have been planted by homeowner or street-by-street plantings. Marc will close out those requests, then check Assessor's Database on remaining requests to see if house sold since request.

Solar Phase 3 (JM)

RFP for Phase 3 has long list of sites. Julia has not looked at all yet, but RFP lists notes some where trees could be issue, like Library parking lot, Richardson St parking lot. There are others where trees at edge of parking lots could be issue. Bidders will specify which trees they propose to remove. Composition of City Council has changed so they may not support trees. Julia will get photos of trees potentially affected. Not all non-parking lot sites have been exhausted; list included building roofs. Rumford is done already. BW: cutting trees may lengthen carbon sequestration payback of installing solar. BAD notes dramatic heat island effect in areas with less trees. BAS: why isn't rooftop solar required on buildings like Needham St.

Zervas trees

BAD notes lot of dieback on preserved trees that had roots chopped. MW will keep pruning dead wood but thinks prognosis for one especially not good. Have not done final inch total, but notes project has planted more inches than planned, too. Not expecting to have similar issue at Cabot because fewer trees.

Tree canopy (BAS)

Rather than tree by tree, look at broader perspective of overall canopy. Should we have canopy coverage goal? BW: need a representative on next iteration of Open Space Plan. On 2014-2020 Open Space group, John DeMiceli was NTC rep & BAD was UTC rep.

MW: can use iTree Canopy to generate canopy numbers. No \$ cost, just time. Could do village by village. 500-700 points per village would get pretty accurate estimate of canopy cover.

Approval of April & May minutes

Minutes approved by voice vote.

UTC membership

Jess Barton no longer able to attend due to law clerkships for next two years. Hopes to rejoin at some point. Need new chair.

9/11 tree (BAD)

We had opportunity to get a 9/11 Survivor Tree pear, but Fire HQ was still in process. MW will check with Proia about potential location.