

Urban Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes - Friday, Sept 21, 2018 City Hall, Rm 205

Present: Marc Welch, Barbara Smiley, Julie Malakie, Beth Wilkinson, Guest: Rena Getz

Review of summer meetings & approval of June Minutes

June minutes reviewed and approved. Explained reference to possibility of getting 9/11 survivor tree (Bradford pear) progeny for Fire HQ. JM & BW noted recent Washington Post article on apparent invasiveness of Callery/Bradford pears in DC/Maryland area, but would not affect decision to plant one more pear.

July was informal discussion due to lack of quorum and MW absence. No August meeting per usual practice.

Forestry Department Update (MW)

Removal season winding down. Lower number than previous years, not sure if pattern will continue, or just had a good couple of years. Just under 1,100 removals for FY17, a little over 1,100 including storm losses. Down about 100 from FY16. In change from past practice, this year and last year's removal numbers include newly planted trees that didn't survive, and planting numbers include replacements of those trees. MW did risk assessment April-June and again in August, and other removals are customer reports of problem trees.

Continuing schedule of May-September removals, stump grinding in October, planting in November, more stumps in winter. Because fewer removals, started stump grinding earlier and expect to be done by end of October. Hope to do some proactive pruning in areas to be identified, and other projects, in winter.

Planting goal: 550-600 trees this fall including NTC 100, then another 200 in spring 2019 including NTC 100. Have ordered enough for that, but for city planting, there's about 10-15% of people offered trees who don't want them.

This will be largest planting in 30 or 40 years, pushing limits of staffing maximum. Over 800 trees being watered this year, and next season will be watering 1,100. Already at maximum watering efficiency with current equipment/staff, so spring plantings will be homeowner watering. 500 gallon watering tank empties in 1-1/2 hours. Now using bigger hose to fill faster but still have to move truck for each tree. It takes about 30 seconds to fill a bag. Have to stop at hydrants to refill tank. NUF now has a 900 gallon truck, so will be one less stop for hydrant fill per day. After watering, challenge with 800 new trees per year, and future goal of 900-1,100, is keeping up with pruning. Also should refresh mulch & weed once or twice/year.

BW asked about pesticide application and invasive removal. NUF historically has done poison ivy removal. MW was required to supervise a licensed person, so to save \$\$, became licensed himself. No time anymore for regular poison ivy removal; now it's complaint-driven.

Utility pruning

Eversource line clearing crews (Tree Tech) in Newton for a couple of months. Their preferred pruned space around wires is 12ft above and below, 8ft each side. In last six years they've been on cycle and covered whole city at least once. RG notes notifications to homeowners are not very specific as to when pruning will occur. MW thinks Eversource is aiming for four-year cycle, though some older infrastructure lines may need more frequent pruning. Their supervising arborist Chris Gonzalez is good.

Removal requests

MW will be posting removal requests for Orr Block/Washington Place. Nine trees, older pears, three would be removals anyway. Other six tree are under 10", not in great shape. Developer will plant 19 street trees in area including honeylocust, hackberry, elm and swamp white oaks.

Solar Phase 3

JM got technical proposals of six bidders for Solar Phase 3. Some very long documents but much is marketing info. Still reviewing for which sites they propose doing and what tree impact would be. Ameresco, which did prior contract, only proposes doing 9 sites total including roofs, fewer than many other companies. They want to do double row canopies because single row canopies not economical given cost of supports. Other companies like Daigle or GreenSkies propose to do all sites. Macquarie includes Albemarle Road carpools all the way from Gath Pool to Crafts Street. Ameresco would not do Albemarle at all, and Daigle would only do a small section near pool. GreenSkies goes all the way from just north of school to Crafts St. Anything done here would require Conservation Commission approval.

City will rate technical proposals as highly desirable, desirable, etc. then open price proposals. MW won't be involved until a vendor is selected. JM doubts degree of tree removal will be factor in decision. BW suggests letter asking Sustainability department to consider tree impact in deciding which vendor to choose. RG will work on draft.

JM concerned beyond loss of bigger trees, about lots like NNHS where trees are still small. Philosophical question of whether to have trees in parking lots anymore.

Community help with tree care

RG asked about reaching out to schools to get kids to help with trees they walk by. BW notes watering is not logistically feasible for kids to do, but could speak to Anndy Dannenberg's new Sustainability class. They will have mandatory participation in some kind of conservation activity as part of class. Could be weeding or tree planting day help, or areas like Saw Mill Brook Parkway where Tree Conservancy did weeding/remulching project. JM plans to do weeding/not weeding visual handout noting weeds steal water from tree, for people with NTC trees. Will send to Conservators in time for summer newsletter.

Membership

BAS will resign from UTC effective end of 2018. MW notes Yasodhara Paruchuru (Highlands) and Michel Cruz (Nonantum) have both expressed interest in being on UTC and he told Amalia Timbers both would be suitable. RG also interested and encouraged to apply.

Meeting adjourned.