

# Urban Tree Commission

## Meeting Minutes - Friday, December 21, 2018 City Hall, Rm 205

Present: Marc Welch, Barbara Smiley, Beth Wilkinson, Julia Malakie; Guests: Sue Bottino, Alison Leary, Barbara Brousal Glaser

### Approval of October Minutes

#### Forestry Update:

- Fall planting season done first week of December. Approximately 610-615 city + NTC. Fiscal Year goal 800 including NTC; should be able to reach.
- Already started planning for next fall's planting; will let us know at Feb meeting.
- Pushing limit of watering capability. In 2019 will have 1,100 watering locations vs 800 in 2018. It's 1,100 because trying to do two years of watering.
- Four 400-galling tanks can do 20-15 trees per tank. One tank may be able to do 40 trees.
- Angier obligations for replacement inches done; still doing Zervas obligations
- Now at lowest number of removal requests, stumps & pruning. No more than 20-30 each outstanding.
- In February plan to do small amount of proactive pruning.
- FY19 to date net positive for plantings vs removals.

#### Phase 3 Solar

- AL talked to Peter Smith about PACE program [clean energy financing for homes & businesses]
- Potential for private lots like Chapel, Bridge St, MBTA lots.
- AL sending letter to Greg Reibman about having businesses do more.
- MW will be looking at all Phase 3 sites with potential tree impacts.

#### 10 Mignon Tree Removal Request

- JAM, PC objections, + two more objections after deadline.

#### Significant Trees & Tree Preservation Ordinance

- Truly significant in Newton would be 60" DBH. Even 30" would be too small a cutoff to handle volume.
- Could keep a full time person busy with 30 Tree Permits/year. Now have 200. In theory, a permit is required if working under drip line of a public tree.
- BBG question: if we strengthen ordinance, will any more visits be required. MW: there might be. Now, for an addition to a house, he looks at site plan, aerial & Street View. Almost all replantings are onsite.
- AL: fees may not reflect true costs. MW: no fee if house is occupied, but still need to review.
- AL: what could we do to strengthen? MW: most complaints are about tree removals near property lines. Second most common is about neighbor's builder damaging tree on my property.
- BW: where is it best to put \$\$ and resources? ordinance enforcement, or wooded areas like Nahanton, Cold Spring Park? MW: would need very large increase in permit fee to pay for an enforcement person.
- AL would like data. MW has numbers of tree permits, exempt lots, etc. Enters original caliper inch numbers, but if something changes, not always captured.
- Sue Bottino: some trees are more valuable, e.g. trees in setbacks, in a group for canopy, screening Turnpike. With development along Washington Street, those trees even more valuable. Need to look at not just caliper inches, but where the trees are. MW: has to be defined, specific criteria so it's not judgement-based.
- MW could double or triple review time.

- BW: could we require X number of trees per sq ft of development? AL: big opportunity to do in zoning. BW: special permit process is powerful, for example Northland.
- BAS: can we look at city as % paved, % built, % green. AL: we're doing that because of stormwater. Fee going up significantly on commercial properties. Some pay \$4-6K per year.
- Medium age trees are at best health and carbon sequestration for their size.
- Sue Bottino: calculations don't capture value of screening

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Julia Malakie