

## **Urban Tree Commission**

Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 20, 2017, 7:45 a.m.

City Hall Room 205

Present: Jess Barton, Barbara Darnell, Julia Malakie, Amy Sangiolo, Barbara Smiley, Marc Welch.

Absent: Bob DeRubeis, Francesca Piper Koss, Beth Wilkinson.

### Approval of minutes

The minutes of the December, 2016 meeting were approved by voice vote.

### Forestry Department update

The Forestry Department is about 75% of the way through grinding the backlog of stumps. They are first concentrating on doing the city's snow routes and are almost done with those and then will go through the city to do the main roads.

There was a short discussion of the 441 Ward Street tree removal request. Average Norway maple, shows some signs of decline, but not yet a hazard.

### Gas leak regulations comments

There was a discussion of the gas leak regulations comments ("Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities instituting a Rulemaking Establishing Requirement for Uniform Natural Gas Leaks Classification, D.P.U. 16-31-A"). Focus seems to be on the "super emitter" leaks and the environment as a whole and not the specific trees. Nothing in the comments about trees, but they may still be working on another round of legislation for grade 3 leaks.

### 2017 Planning

- Merit Tree Program: Discussion of starting a Merit Tree Program (or another name) in Newton where residents can nominate a big, historical or important tree in the city. Maybe put a nomination form on the Urban Tree Commission website so that people can nominate, including location, a picture, and other relevant information. We will look into this more for the February meeting. This would be a way to recognize trees, not giving any extra legal protection to the trees. Maybe integrate a map so that residents can know where trees are. Also could post the nominations list on the website. Idea to start with a Tab article about a special tree on public property, with botany information, species, and historical information in order to introduce residents to the idea.
- Tree Award Program: Discussion of starting a tree award program. Would have different categories (residential, good practices on construction site, maintaining older trees, etc.). Will maybe talk about this more at future meetings. Maybe combine with the potential Merit Tree Program in the future.

- Newsletter: Discussion of starting a newsletter in 2017 that can be emailed out. Newsletter will potentially include any tree related Tab articles written by UTC members, relevant tree related numbers (such as trees planted, number of stumps ground, trees lost to storms) and photos in order to keep residents informed. The city already keeps information on the website at “DataStat” (<http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/executive/metrics/default.asp>) but we could make the tree information more accessible.

### New Business

- Barbara Darnell had a question about whether it is possible to put tree permits online. Marc said that it is a work in progress and that you can currently see the construction permits online (on the Inspectional Services page) and can see the related tree permits. You can look up the permit on the Inspectional Services page in relation to a construction site. There is currently no way to look up information about a tree if there is not construction going on.
- Marc: still looking at potential connection between construction and loss of street trees. Looking through data to see if there is any correlation.
- West Newton Complete Streets Project: Amy Sangiolo asked if the UTC is involved in the planning at all. Marc said that he has been involved, but not too much at this point because there is a lot to be worked out before tree planting/ species selection. Jess will email Rachel Blatt to ask for the UTC to be updated and included in the planning.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.