

Urban Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 21, 2016, 7:45 a. m.,

City Hall Room 205

Present: Jess Barton, Julia Malakie, Barbara Smiley, Marc Welch, Beth Wilkinson

Absent: Barbara Darnell, Bob DeRubeis, Francesca Piper Koss, Amy Sangiolo

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the September meeting were approved by voice vote.

Forestry Department update

The Risk Tree Removal process has been completed. Until the end of May, 2017, non-emergency tree removal will be driven by request. During October, some proactive pruning was undertaken with contract help. Some stump removal work is starting now. With a \$500,000 City allocation for stump removal, and some limited tree removal, Forestry will be engaging some contractors and acquiring necessary equipment. The goal is to have +/- 2,500 stumps removed (ground down) by March.

Forestry planting goal for November is 150-200 trees (bare root), which is 50-75 fewer than planned for this part of FY2017. Spring planting will add 100 trees, which will bring FY2017 total to 300 trees planted.

FY2017 "risk removals" to date total 800-900 trees.

Dealing with individual tree issues

Concerns about several recent specific City tree removals, removal requests and instances of damage led to discussion of UTC's focus on individual events after the fact rather than what the Commission could do to make sure that they don't occur. A suggestion was made to categorize the removal events to determine how future instances might be prevented, to address a problem in general rather than to focus on a particular tree loss. Other suggestions were to advocate with Councillors and the Mayor, and to educate the public about what Forestry does and what the Urban Forest is and how it is managed.

After discussion, it was agreed to write an article for the Tab's Op-Ed section about the November tree planting and follow up periodically with articles about Newton's urban forest and how it is managed. Jess Barton will take on this project. Subjects for future articles were also suggested.

Marc also discussed several of the individual tree issues that had been raised, covering issues and developments related to sidewalk construction and species selection and diversification.

UTC 2017 planning

After a brief discussion of increasing membership and election of a 2017 Chair, this item was deferred to the November meeting.

New Business

There was no new business

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.