**Urban Tree Commission Minutes**

**June 25. 2021**

In attendance: Marc Welch

Howard Birnbaum

Julia Malakie

Yasodhara Paruchura

Amy Sangiolo

      Beth Wilkinson

**Forestry Report**

Marc reported that before the watering season started, his crew took out 20-30 tress that were not doing well. He said that rate of loss (out of 1200-1300 trees) is well below the industry standard. He noted that it’s not clear why red oaks in particular have not done well in the bare-root form that’s been so successful in Newton. He also noted that young bare-root elms and serviceberries are hard to keep upright because of their small roots.

The forestry crew has now completed most of the pruning. An outside firm contracted for the season will respond to incoming requests for the rest of the season.

This week, the city crews will begin to remove at-risk trees. There are 300-400 trees to be removed this year. That is an average number and slightly lower than last year.

Marc said that there are two tree-removal requests: on Woodcliff and Winnetaska Roads.

**Potential for ARPA funding**

Mayor Fuller requested recommendations for allocating the city’s money from federal ARPA Covid relief funding. Commission members agreed that we should submit a letter to request funds for the Forestry Department. (Members who were not at the meeting subsequently agreed, and a letter was sent.)

**Newton Public Tree Plan**

Marc reported that he and his crew will be working on a long-term plan for increasing and caring for Newton’s tree canopy. The plan will be developed by in-house staff, and they hope to have 80% of the plan completed by the late winter of 2022. They will seek input from the Urban Tree Commission, the Newton Tree Conservancy, elected officials, and members of the public. They also will review the tree plans of nearby communities.

The plan will include data of the existing street and park trees, the history of the city’s urban canopy, and benchmarks for what needs to be done.

**Street Inventory**

Marc explained that the long-awaited (by us) updated inventory of Newton’s street trees is almost complete. There are 13,000-14,000 trees (out of a total of 20,000-21,000) already entered into the inventory. Tree Inspector Jordan will enter more trees into the system over the winter. When the inventory is complete, it will be integrated into the city’s GIS system so that people will have access to the information.