**Urban Tree Commission Minutes**

**December 17. 2021**

In attendance: Marc Welch

Howard Birnbaum

Barbara Darnell

Julia Malakie

      Beth Wilkinson

Julie Winsett

**Minutes**

The minutes for November were approved.

**Forestry Report**

During the fall planting season, Urban Forestry planted 760 trees—the most done in a single year since the 1970s! Of that number, 140 were planted in coordination with the Newton Tree Conservancy. In addition, in 2021 Green Newton’s 4C initiative raised money for 230 trees, 10 of which were planted this fall.

The total of 600 trees planted in 2020 was the second highest number done since the 1970s.

In the spring, those trees will be mulched and given tree gators for watering. Throughout the growing season, the forestry staff will water between 1200 and 1600 trees each week and also will weed those trees. That is the maximum number that the current staff can manage.

The next phase of the seasonal work will be stump grinding, which will last until there is snow on the berm. Then, the staff will shift to tree removal and pruning of mature trees.

**Tree Removal**

There are two tree removal requests this month:

-An 11” maple at 59 Selwyn Road (because the tree is “impacting installation of a wider driveway”) and

-A 15” maple and a 20” linden at 94-96 Webster Street (because the trees are “impacting planned construction on the site”).

**City Street Tree Plan**

At the January meeting of the Commission, Marc will give a presentation about Newton’s street trees that will take most of the meeting.

Marc said that he anticipates that the Newton City Street Tree Plan lan will be complete by the end of 2022. He initiated a discussion about what topics Commission members think are important to have included in the new plan. The following topics were raised:

-Tree loss across the city

-Staffing and caring for the city’s trees

-Tree canopy, heat islands and environmental justice

-Public trees vs. overall tree canopy

-Overall tree canopy loss compared to past times (with help of city GIS)

-The effect of climate change on street trees

-Discussion of developers and trees and how development impacts trees

-Information to help the public realize the importance of trees

-General information on benefits of trees (health and economic benefits)

-Doug Tallamy type information on the benefits of trees for wildlife

-Information on how trees prevent stormwater runoff, sequester carbon

-How trees help to reduce energy use and utility expenses

-Need to prune trees and the importance of taking care of trees we have

-Planting plan for coming years

-Information on diversity and the species planted in Newton

-Discussion of native trees vs non-native trees

-Discussion of curb cuts and the width of berms

-Consideration of gas leaks and street trees

-Discussion of the city’s requirements for the width of driveways

-Guidelines for utility company pruning

-Guidelines for protecting trees when gas lines, etc., are replaced

We also considered how the new City Street Tree Plan will work with the already existing Tree Manual.