**Urban Tree Commission Minutes**

**February 18, 2022**

In attendance: Marc Welch

 Howard Birnbaum

 Michele Forte Cruz

 Julia Malakie

      Beth Wilkinson

 Julie Winsett

 Guests: Elizabeth Sockwell

 Melissa Brown

**Minutes**

The minutes from the January meeting were approved.

**Forestry Report**

Marc reported that Urban Forestry staff members finished their second week of street tree pruning, working primarily on Fairway Drive and Randlett Park near Albemarle. He said that they have received good feedback from neighbors. For the rest of February and early March, they will work in Newton Highlands and Oak Hill, south of Route 9. They will prune on Truman, Oakland, Woodcliff, Parker, and Walnut streets.

The City budget process is scheduled to begin in March.

Howard asked whether owners are required to pay for tree removals that they request. Marc explained that they must pay for the cost of removal and for inch-by-inch replacement. For example, a 10”-diameter tree could be replaced by ten 1”-diameter trees.

City Councilors Emily Norton and Julia Malakie will meet with Marc and Marie Lawler from the City’s Law Department to discuss possible changes to the Private Tree Ordinance. They will discuss better ways to protect the tree canopy and trees that are on properties that abut properties under construction. They also want to consider whether the City can increase the inch-for-inch replacement rate for tree removals.

Marc reported on a new watering truck that will be constructed for the Forestry Department. It will add capacity and allow the team to be more efficient. He hopes that it will become a template for more trucks in the future. He said that if they can cut seconds off watering each tree, the time will add up so that they can water more trees, and, thus, will have the ability to plant more trees—up to 100 more trees each year. He said that the old fill time was one minute per tree and that it’s now down to 35 seconds per tree.

Most of Newton’s trees now are watered with water trailers that hold 300 gallons each. There is an old truck that can hold 900 gallons, but it is too big. The aim is for a truck that holds 600-800 gallons and that the driver can use without getting out of his seat.

**Tree Removal**

A request is expected for the Dunstan East project on Washington Street. More information to come.

**City Street Tree Plan**

Next month, Marc will present information about the number and benefits of mature trees vs. small trees.