**Urban Tree Commission Minutes**

**October 15. 2021**

In attendance: Marc Welch

Howard Birnbaum

Barbara Darnell

      Beth Wilkinson

Julie Winsett

**Forestry Report**

Marc reported that all large-scale tree removals have been done for the season. The tree crew has started its once-a-year stump grinding, working on the stumps of all trees removed over the past year. By the beginning of November, the team will begin tree planting.

The department has an aggressive plan to plant 500-600 trees this fall. The Newton Tree Conservancy is responsible for approximately 140 trees, a number that may be reduced to 120 after sites with gas leaks are eliminated.

**ARPA Funds**

Mayor Fuller allocated $250,000 of ARPA funds to help street trees. Some of the funding is for pruning some mature trees that haven’t been done for decades and also young trees that have been in the ground for only a couple years. A contractor may help with some of the work. In addition, some of the funding will be used to build a new watering truck to increase the department’s ability to water newly planted trees.

**Tree Removal Requests**

There was an objection to the removal request for 17 Fellsmere Road, so Marc will deny that request. The owners of property at 24 Oakdale Road asked to have the removal posting pulled so that they can work for a better solution.

**Risk Assessment Analysis**

In the process of answering a question about removing a tree hit by a truck, Marc explained Urban Forestry’s Risk Analysis/Assessment process. He said that it is a robust program in which he or one of his employees drive by all trees two to three times a year to assess their health and likelihood of failing.

**Sugar Maple at Newton Highlands Playground**

Julia easked about a large sugar maple at Newton Highlands Playground on which half of the foliage seems to be dead. She wondered whether construction during the park’s renovation could have harmed the tree. Marc replied that during the work on the first park to receive such extensive work in 30 years, the trees were well protected. He also said that the City was careful to site the pathways on that challenging site away from the dripline of the trees. He said that they tree broke in a storm and that decay inside the tree can remain hidden for many years.