

Urban Tree Commission Minutes

September 16, 2022

In attendance: Marc Welch
Howard Birnbaum
Barbara Darnell
Julia Malakie
Amy Sangiolo
Beth Wilkinson
Julie Winsett

Guests: Barbara Brousal-Glaser
Melissa Brown
Andreae Downs
Alice Ingerson
“Jerry Schieraj” name on screen
“Known Presence” name on screen

Opening and Minutes

Julia started a recording of the meeting.

The minutes of the July 22 meeting were approved.

Forestry Report:

Marc reported that, as in July, the Forestry staff has been doing risk-tree removal, pruning from service requests, and some stump removal. The risk-tree removal should be completed within a couple weeks. The pruning from requests will end in October.

There vacancy on the Urban Forestry staff is expected to be filled in October. A candidate is in the pre-employment process now. Then for the first time in more than a year, all six crew positions will be filled.

Julia asked about the longer-term outlook for tree workers. Marc replied that it's poor. During his years as a student at UMass, there were 40-50 incoming students each year. This year, there are only 6. He said that there now are 30-40 available jobs per applicant. The City of Boston is supporting the program at Mt. Ida to help create more urban forestry staff.

Soon, owners of the properties that are slated to receive street trees will be notified. Ten to fifteen percent of them will ask not to get their trees, and those trees will be reassigned to other spots and used to replace failed plantings from earlier years.

Tree Removals:

Marc referred to two tree-removal notices that were sent out. One is a silver maple at Mague Place, and one is a Linden at Andrew Street. Both removals were requested by the DPW and

necessary to meet ADA requirements. Marc said that he received objections to both removals, so he denied the removal permits.

Proposals to Update Newton's Tree Preservation Ordinance

There are two proposals to update Newton's Tree Preservation Ordinance. One was created by City Councilors Julia Malakie and Emily Norton, and one was created by City Forester Marc Welch. The proposals (as well as a tree-removal moratorium proposed by Councilors Malakie and Norton) will be presented to the Programs and Services Committee of the City Council on Wednesday, September 21.

Before the meeting, Marc sent out links to the docket items in the Friday Packet for the City Council:

Tree Ordinance memo from Councilors Malakie and Norton

- <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/89309/637953155700900000>

Mayor Tree Preservation Ordinance Docket Request #412-22

- <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/90060>

The spirited discussion included analysis of the formula for the Environmental Mitigation Fee in the Malakie/Norton proposal. As reported at the time, the details of the spirited and detailed discussion were not captured for the minutes and can be viewed in the recording of the meeting.

Vote on Moratorium

Howard asked what would need to be done to take a vote to support the tree-removal moratorium proposed by Councilors Malakie and Norton. Beth explained that there would have to be a motion and a vote. Howard made the motion, which was seconded by Barbara. The vote was 5 in favor of the moratorium and 1 opposed. Those in favor of supporting the moratorium were Howard, Barbara, Julia, Julie, and Amy. Beth was opposed to doing so. Amy said that she would send notice of the vote to the City Council.

Proposal for a Letter and a Special Meeting

The UTC members of the UTC in favor of the Malakie/Norton proposal discussed writing a letter to the City Council to express their support. Howard offered to write the letter and asked what should be included. Melissa offered to send him a letter that she's been using. It was decided that Howard would modify the letter and send it out to members, who would send their suggested edits back to only him.

Amy proposed a special meeting to vote on the letter, and members agreed to meet on Friday, July 23. Beth said that she would post the meeting.

Update on Cemetery Trees

Julia asked whether the Mayor has announced a decision on the Newton Cemetery's appeal to be able to remove more trees than allowed by the Tree Preservation Ordinance. Marc said that she has not done so.

Other tree removals

Julia asked about trees that were cut down on an Elgin Street property. Marc said that there is no permit for that property and that he's watching the property and will address the issue with the owners. They removed three large oak trees.

Julia also asked about a private tree cut down at condos at 82 Lincoln Street. Marc said that they should have applied for a permit and said that he's been trying to reach an officer of the condo association.