

Urban Tree Commission Minutes

March 17, 2023

In attendance: Marc Welch
Julia Malakie
Amy Sangiolo
Beth Wilkinson
Julie Winsett

Guests: Ruth Goldman (since approved as member)
Laura Petrillo

Opening and Minutes.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved by all voting members.

Forestry Report:

Marc reported that it's been a straightforward month for his staff and that they spent the end of February doing pro-active pruning. Since then, they did tree removals and pruning from requests from the public. He said that they're in a better position in regard to that backlog than he can remember. They also will be doing some pruning of trees in wooded areas, parking lots, and the Greenway.

As soon as the leaf mulch arrives (probably in the second or third week of April), they will begin follow-up mulching and care for more than 3,000 locations.

This spring, the Forestry Department will plant fifty to one hundred trees, most of them replacements for those that did not survive the winter. They also will work with the Newton Tree Conservancy to plant an additional 100 trees. In June, they will begin choosing sites for the fall planting.

At the end of April, they will begin to review street trees as part of their regular Risk Tree Survey.

Because the city's operating override was not approved, there will be no increase in the departmental budget this year. The budget process will be starting soon.

The open staff position has not yet been filled, but there is a potential candidate. If that prospect doesn't work out, Marc will re-post the ad.

Tree Removals

There were no new applications and no new developments on the prior applications.

Programs and Services Committee Discussion of Proposed Changes to Tree Ordinance

The Programs and Services Committee of the City Council will resume its review of the two proposals to update the Private Tree Ordinance in April.

New Business

Julia asked whether the invasive and damage-causing spotted lantern fly has been seen in Newton yet, and Marc reported that it has not. There was discussion that the ailanthus tree (tree of heaven) is the host plant for the lantern flies.

Marc reported that the ash trees at the back of Warren house will receive an injectable treatment for emerald ash borers at the end of May.

Julia reported on a PlanIT Geo webinar about a Connecticut company that finds uses for the lumber from large trees cut down in nearby cities. Marc said that it's expensive to dispose of the wood from trees that are removed. He said that most of it is chipped for bark mulch or sold to be burned to create electricity.