

City of Northampton, MA
Public Shade Tree Commission (PSTC)

March 4, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Beth Willard

Meeting Called to Order

Lilly Lombard, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM, and announced the audio recording of the meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Lilly Lombard, Chair	X	
Susan Lofthouse, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	Absent	
Jennifer Werner	Absent	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	
Rob Postel	X	
David Lukens	X	
Staff & Visitors	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden	X	
Beth Willard, DPW Clerk	X	
Tess Perrone, former Planning Board Chair	X	4:50 PM

Public Comment

- Cynthia Dean, member of the public from Ashfield, was in attendance. She was curious to see what the role of the Commission was and how it operated within the city.

Approval of previous minutes

- Minutes were read and amended by commission members.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve Feb. 19, 2020 minutes	Sue Lofthouse	David Lukens	Yes 4, No 0, Abstain 1

Chair Report

- Lilly's presentation is on City Council's 4/2/20 agenda.
 - She still needs to talk with George Kohout.
 - She will also connect with the Mayor.
- Lilly noted the passage of the 2 ½ override.
- She shared a newsletter put out by Bartlett Tree Service with the PSTC.
- Lilly & Rich both spoke at Rick Harper's course held at Spring Grove Cemetery & discussed the Public Shade Tree program with the participants.
- A concern from a resident about the Village Hill street tree plan was forwarded to Rich and Rob.
- Lilly met as a private citizen with Carolyn Misch to show her how to use the ITree tools.
- The Lyman Mansion owned by Smith College being offered for sale.
 - Carolyn accepted her offer to do a walk through with Bob Leverett of the 2nd tier area.
 - Carolyn suggested broaching tree issues there at a neighborhood meeting.

- Ashley Mushpratt of the Energy and Sustainability Commission is investigating Urban Forest carbon credits, as excess credits can be sold.
 - Lilly suggested looking into a summer intern to research this.
- Lilly asked for suggestions for guest speakers at future PSTC meetings.
 - Marilyn suggested someone from Eversource.
 - Rich is meeting with Columbia Gas (Eversource) Friday and will ask about it.

Tree Warden Report

- Rich has filed the Tree City USA 2019 report which included:
 - 3,089 volunteer hours
 - 400 trees planted
 - 260 trees pruned
 - 58 tree removals
 - Monetary estimate was a total of \$610,786.00 or \$23.77 per capita expenditure:
 - \$100,493.00 for planting and initial care
 - \$137,556.00 for tree maintenance
 - \$264,949.00 for tree removals
 - \$107,788.00 for management
 - Last year was a total of \$556,144.00.
- Rich is also working on the Growth Award for the 4th year.
- He will be scheduling a Public Shade Tree Hearing on a 26” DBH Red Oak on Park Hill Rd. Extension. Mitigation on it would be \$6,800.
- He has reviewed the Pine Grove Golf Course documents, which have gone out to bid.
 - The area for the planting project is about 42,000 sq. ft.
 - He will look at the site tomorrow with Rob.

Guest, Tess Perrone, former chair of Northampton Planning Board

- She mentioned that she had been a member for about 6 years, and chaired for about 1 ½ year.
- She gave a general overview of the Planning Board functions.
- She recommended putting together a brief policy statement detailing the PSTC position on development applications that could be provided to the Planning Board when these applications come up.
- She also recommended the PSTC plan a dialog or to present a report to them at a meeting on a quarterly basis.
- She also recommended evaluating the approach by both bodies to development applications.

Picture Main St.—PSTC input needed

- Lilly went over the Google Doc with PSTC member comments added in. Specific points were:
 - Dense shade along the entire street.
 - Achieve a linear wall along the street with multiple species.
 - Consider an island in the middle of the street.
 - Bury the utilities.
 - Have the canopy extend over the street for storm water mitigation.
 - Design for the trees’ future success.

- There was a consensus on the document, and Lilly will submit it as amended.

Arbor Day Planning

- Marilyn said Historic Northampton already had events scheduled and could not accommodate the film at that time, but another date might be possible.
 - Another date will be explored.
 - Sue mentioned a concern that it be open and free to the public, and if other costs would be involved.
- Rich reported the whips are ordered and should arrive Monday or Tuesday before Arbor Day.
- Two orders have been placed for Spring, with all items being in stock:
 - 62 bare root trees (for the Arbor Day planting).
 - Delivery is scheduled for the Tuesday before Arbor Day.
 - 187 grow bag trees
 - In addition, there is some left over stock in the Spring Grove nursery plot.
- Sue will put out the call for volunteers.
 - She noted the capacity of TreeNorthampton is limited by the number of leaders available.
 - Rich has an intern coming in at the Forestry Dept. from Northampton High School.
 - The intern will be doing 5 hours per week through midsummer.
 - He also noted the Environmental Science teacher there, Dan Moylan, is interested in being involved in the plantings.
 - Rich will be attending a Future Farmers of America event sponsored by Smith School at Look Park involving multiple vocational schools, and hopes to spark some interest.
- Cooley Dickinson Hospital has accepted the Arbor Day planting proposal.
 - They are concerned about the placement of trees around their signs and pruning trees.
 - 22 of the bare root trees are planned for there.
- The Senior Center project needs a plan put together.
 - It does not need to be done at the same time if bare root stock is not used.
- The schools have not responded to repeated attempts to interest them in the state competition.

Planting Plan discussion

- Sue mentioned that Molly is changing some of the criteria on the data collection sheets.
 - The deadline to get them done would be mid to late May, June 1 being the hard deadline.
- Rich pointed out resources are being stretched due to the number of proposed and unfinished projects.
 - There are three large projects for the fall:
 - The Environmental Justice Area Grant still has to be done.
 - The South St. Neighborhood project will have to be scheduled in.
 - The downtown Northampton/downtown Florence planting locations project.
 - There is also the Ward 6 planting project to deal with.

Any other business not anticipated by Chair

- Sue mentioned an email from the Planning Director requesting input on a Request for Bids for Main St., Florence.

- It is still in the planning stages, and some basic information is requested for the surveyor.
- The question arose of what kind of survey is being planned, or if the PSTC being asked for design suggestions.
- Some suggestions for information to return to him included:
 - Basic requirements for planting a tree in the urban landscape,
 - Specific locations for placing trees on Main St., Florence,
 - General suggestions, such as increasing the number of trees by a certain percent, or overall canopy coverage increase.
- It was felt that more clarification was needed.
- Lilly will provide him with some minimum dimensions and requirements for tree plantings.

To Do list

- Lilly plans to check with the Mayor, invite Mollie Freilicher back to a meeting, asked for more guest suggestions, set up the next STO subcommittee meeting with David, and meet with Carolyn Misch.
- Marilyn plans to work on the planting plan for downtown Northampton and work on another date for the film with Historic Northampton.
- David plans to work on updating the STO, meet with Rob for a walk around, and follow up with a thank you to Tess.
- Rob plans to prep for the planting season, continue pruning, tag trees, and stake planting locations when the ground thaws.
- Rich plans to check with the city lawyer about open meeting law questions, set a date for the Public Shade Tree Hearing, meet with Columbia Gas on Friday, email Wayne about the Main St., Florence redesign, and finish the tree order.
- Sue plans to get materials and volunteers ready for Arbor Day.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn	Marilyn Castriotta	Sue Lofthouse	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.