

City of Northampton, MA
Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)

Date 1/4/23

Meeting Minutes

Submitted By: Bonnie Netto

Meeting Called to Order

Richard Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. and announced that this virtual meeting would be recorded to the Cloud via the Zoom platform.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Richard Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair	X	
Susan Lofthouse, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	X	A: 4:55pm
Jennifer Werner	X	
Rob Postel	X	A: 4:50pm
David Lukens	X	
Staff & Visitors	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Bonnie Netto, DPW Clerk	X	
Devorah Levy	X	
Kent & Gill	X	
Diane Scott	X	
Carole Horowitz	X	
Abdulaziz Hanif	X	A: 4:33
Jackie Balance	X	A: 4:34
Jesse Olsson	X	A: 4:35 L:5:02

Public Comment

- Diane Scott hopes the City puts high expectations on builders to follow rigid guidelines when doing lot clearing. She expressed her concerns about a project on Landy Ave and how she feels it is not being handles properly.
- Jackie Balance commented on the pollinator gardens/area and suggests using milkweed

Review/approve minutes from November 16, 2022 & December 7, 2022 meeting

- A motion was proposed, seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no further discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve the November 16, 2022 meeting minutes.	Susan Lofthouse	Jennifer West	Yes 4 , No 0 , Abstain 0
To approve the December 7, 2022 meeting minutes.	Susan Lofthouse	Jennifer West	Yes 4 , No 0 , Abstain 0

Chair/Tree Warden Report

- Rich responded to Diane Scott: Property owner on Landy Avenue had an assessment done by a land surveyor about the building demolition and steps to be taken during the process. Because it is by-right construction, we have no documents detailing the amount of tree removed on these types of projects. It would be helpful to have some process that would track the loss of trees on property that fall under by-right construction. This would have to be documented through the building department for they are responsible for issuing building permits. It is an interesting concept and should be examined further to determine if it is a feasible goal is for 2023. This would help in determining if we do indeed have significant canopy loss through the by-right construction process.
- There has been a written request for a Public Shade Tree Hearing. The potential removals consist of two (2) trees, a four and half (4 ½) inch Elm and a two (2) inch Sugar Maple. This is required to make room for a driveway at 367 Coles Meadow Road. This project will also have to cross wetlands and has been approved by the Conservation Commission. The project has been in process since 2019.
- Rich reached out to Carolyn Misch regarding STO and our draft changes. Nothing to report yet, but he will let us know.
- Rich got a new i-Tree canopy analysis from the US Forest Service. Rich will reach out and see if we can get historical data, maybe dividing it into wards.

Fall Planting Wrap Up

- 191 trees were planted this year bringing our total since 2015 to 1,997
- Susan Lofthouse said she would be interested in mortality rates of those trees. Rob thinks about 90-95% of our trees have survived. About 75 trees died last year. The City only waters the trees with bags on them, usually about 12,000 gallons a week that are used. Carole Horowitz asked if the committee has analyzed what types of trees were lost. Rob said we lost a lot of Tulip trees.
- We will be planting again this spring.

Goals for 2023

- Rich would like the Commissioners to think about this
- There are some goals from 2022 that were not accomplished
- Molly Hale suggests setback plantings, outreach to homeowners. Rich has a door hanger “draft” that could be worked on. She also would like monitoring of Ailanthus trees
- Jennifer Werner would like to do public outreach on The Spotted Lanternfly, maybe a table at the tree whip giveaway. We could provide literature from MDAR website
- Susan Lofthouse thinks a priority would be an education campaign teaching how to protect trees and care for them. We need to get people onboard to plant trees.
- Jen Werner also would like to form a group that is community based to work on by-right areas, maybe create legislation at an ordinance level. It was discussed that currently a property owner can clear up to an acre before a permit is needed.
- Fill the opening on the Commission
- David Lukens would like us to continue working with the schools. If each school accepted 16 trees, that would be great! Parents could get involved. Jen has a meeting with Leeds School on Monday. We are already working with Jackson Street School as well as Ryan Road School.
- As a commission we may need to zoom out farther, maybe a joint meeting with Amherst?
- Rich met with other City Departments about using city areas to turn into pollinator areas. There are lots of areas but they would be difficult to get water to.
- Will partner with Smith Vocational. There are 5 acres across from Scotti’s that students will do soil prep and mow every other year to keep woody materials out.

Future UFC Meetings and Guest Speakers

- Rich hopes to continue having a Guest Speaker once a month. Molly Hale agrees as long as they are relevant. Suggestions are welcome.
- The next meeting is January 18th, always the first and third Wednesday of every month

Any other business not anticipated by the Chair

- Rich sent Committee members a link to a survey (City Council Select Committee Survey re: Barriers to Serving on Appointed Boards) that he would like them to complete.
- Jennifer Werner was contacted by Grow Food Northampton. They are doing a reforestation project and asked Jen to look at their plans. She will report back once she looks at them. It is in the planning stages only.
- Rich will have a seedling list at the next meeting. We gave away 600 last year. We will have Paw-paws this year.
- A motion was proposed, seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn.	Jennifer Werner	Molly Hale	Yes 6 , No 0 , Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.