

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

January 16, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Beth Willard

**Meeting Called to Order**

Lilly Lombard, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and announced the audio/visual recording of the meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Lilly Lombard, Chair	X	
Todd Ford, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	Absent	
Jennifer Werner	X	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	4:39 PM
Rob Postel	X	
Susan Lofthouse	X	
<b>Staff &amp; Visitors</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden	X	
Beth Willard, DPW Clerk	X	
Kristina Bezanson, UMass, visitor	X	
Mollie Freilicher, DCR, visitor	X	

**Public Comment**

- No public comment

**Approval of previous minutes**

- Minutes were read and amended by commission members.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve January 2, 2019 minutes as amended	Jen Werner	Marilyn Castriotta	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 1

**Chair Report**

- Lilly reported Madeleine has finished the TreeSpeak recordings and will send to Karyn Nelson.
- Lilly noted that Rich received the Tree Warden of the Year award, and Mollie Freilicher, Mass. DCR Urban & Community Forestry, received the President’s Award.
  - Lilly is working with the Mayor on a press release and article for the Gazette.
- She also noted the children’s Arbor Day poster contest for the elementary schools.
  - Rich will forward the poster announcement to the schools.
  - The deadline for the contest is March 15.

**Tree Warden Report**

- Aspen Realty agreed to pay \$500 for illegally removing the Public Shade Tree at 115 Bridge St.
- Rich expressed his thanks for the support of the Urban Forestry Program.

### **Ordinance updates and tree protection through permitting**

- Rich noted that in the case of the solar ordinance, PSTC recommendations were incorporated into the document.
  - It has been forwarded to the mayor, and he will send it to the City Council.
  - The next city council meeting is tomorrow, and the ordinance is expected to be referred to committee.
- Rich and Todd are drafting public shade tree protection and preservation language that eventually will be inserted into the DPW driveway and trench permits.

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### **Kristina Bezanson, UMass Arboriculture Lecturer, Management Planning**

- Lilly said there were several presentations that were offered, the one on tree management plans was selected as the most useful to the Commission at this time.
  - She forwarded the Davey Tree Management Plan and the PSTC Tree Planting Plan to Kristina.
- Kristina has worked on two Urban Forestry Management Plans for cities that she has lived in.
  - She noted that the Davey Tree plan is an ambitious Tree Management plan.
    - It is only one part of an Urban Forest Management Plan.
- Urban Forest Management Plans generally have three main components:
  - Quantifying the Urban Tree Canopy city wide (includes both public & private areas),
  - Communication - determine what the citizens want for the city's future, such as cleaner air, habitat development, business/economic development, etc., and work with them,
  - Sustainable Management, with effective enforcement policies.
    - Do different departments in the city have different policies for managing trees?
    - Are there ordinances that conflict/compete with each other with reference to trees?
- The Urban Forest represents green infrastructure and includes items such as swales, green spaces, rain gardens, etc.
  - The urban forest includes privately owned trees, requiring us to work with those owners.
  - Preserves are part of the urban forest.
  - Fire Management plans need to be in place.
  - Debris Management plans need to be in place for storm events.
  - Landscape should be managed as an ecosystem, not for beautification purposes.
  - The idea of crime prevention through environmental design can be promoted through education in schools and other public institutions.
- Urban Forestry Management Plan components include:
  - Yearly status of the urban forest report,
  - Tree "report cards" (Casey Tree Foundation has these available on the web),
  - Arbor Day programs,
  - Partnership with watershed and nonprofit groups,
  - Wood recycling/reuse programs,
  - Getting accredited for having an Urban Forest Management Plan through a group such as the Association of Public Works or Society of Municipal Arborists.

- The Legacy Tree Program is a gateway to getting the citizenry concerned about trees.
  - Legacy Trees can include trees of significant size, age, species, or historical significance.
- Identify the Stakeholders.
  - Talk to other cities with model ordinances and use existing experts in our city departments.
- Consider the future of Northampton’s urban forest.
  - Consider how to support the Urban Forestry Department now and into the future.
    - Ordinances and a really good management plan will help.
- She is local and available as a resource, and encouraged members to reach out to her.
- Sue asked about a streamlined way of estimating the Urban Tree Canopy.
  - Kristina suggested i-Tree on the web, and suggested looking at the i-Tree canopy tool.
  - She said you can develop it by ward, by zip code, by watershed, by urban/suburban/rural divisions, or any way of dividing it up that you please.
    - It is important that the tool chosen make it easy to communicate the information to the public.

### **Subcommittee Report**

- Lilly & Molly are trying to firm up the 2019 and 2020 planting plans.
  - They are hoping that 250 trees could be planted per year.
    - 125 trees dedicated for Priority Streets
    - 15 trees for Arbor Day Plantings
    - 20 trees for Neighborhood Planting Projects
    - 50 trees for Ward Based Plantings
    - 40 trees for Ad Hoc/Request Plantings
- Under the 2019 planting plan:
  - For the neighborhood project, Prospect St. was chosen
  - For the Ward Based plantings, the subcommittee looked at Molly’s spreadsheet.
    - Wards 3 & 4 were generously represented in the record of recent plantings.
    - Ward 6 has received the least amount of plantings in the last 3 years.
    - The subcommittee recommended a focused effort on Ward 6.
      - 50 plantings would bring the ward up to a level commensurate with Wards 1, 2, 5, & 7.
      - Ward 6 is well canopied in some areas, but the subdivisions off Ryan Rd. could offer lots of opportunities for plantings.
  - For Arbor Day, Lilly suggested a targeted planting at the YMCA and the Cahill Apartments off Fruit St.
    - These would be set back plantings on private properties, which would require permission be obtained.
  - For Ad Hoc plantings, roughly 10 each planted in Wards 1, 5, & 7B would bring all the wards up to at least 80 trees.
  - For Priority Street Plantings, the subcommittee recommended finishing the plantings on Route 9, Route 10, and King St.
    - King St. has lots of spots that are under wires.
    - These areas continue to be ones that will provide the most impact when considering traffic calming, aesthetics, air quality, etc. as they are gateways to the city.

- Bridge Rd. also had not been finished, and is on the list for 2019.
- Rich noted that Woodlawn Ave. will provide planting opportunities, with 8 trees taken down already on the Childs Park side and possibly 6 to 7 more to come down on the other side.
- Rich & Todd had questions about numbers, priority species or groups in the plantings.
  - Molly has a spread sheet of trees planted by species over 3 years
  - Species planted that total 45 or more are Crabapple, Ginkgo, Sweet Gum, Honey Locust, & London Planetree.
- Ward 6 plantings present a public relations problem, as many of the streets in the neighborhoods have no sidewalks and no defined tree belt. Many people mistakenly believe they own to the edge of the street.
  - It will need some kind of public information dissemination about the city right of way, so that residents don't get upset about tree plantings there.
  - Lilly suggested contacting Councilor LaBarge to help with public contact. Rich will reach out to her.
  - She also suggested emphasizing set back trees.
  - Another solution would be to write "Public Tree" on the tree stakes when they are put in.
  - Sue wondered about applying a different standard here from other wards that have heavy bike & walking traffic, and questioned if Ward parity was necessary.
    - Lilly pointed out that the downtown wards will have more, but what really needs to be addressed is the perception that Ward 6 is being left out.
- Motion to accept the plan was made, with discussion following:
  - Rich would like some flexibility in the language for plantings, as they are frequently dependent upon the planting location and the available nursery stock.
  - Rob noted a concern about Priority Street plantings, such as on Rte. 10, which are frequently high salt areas.
    - He is still waiting to see the results of what has been planted in those areas - whether the trees will survive in that environment or not.
    - He questions if it makes sense to plant more trees in an area where we do not yet understand the success rate, or whether it might be better to wait a little longer to see how successful those planted there are.

• Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adopt the 2019 Priorities plan as presented by the subcommittee following the Plan of the Plan	Todd Ford	Marilyn Castriotta	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 1

**Planning Schedule**

- Todd noted that we are on track for the year.
  - The plan has been adopted.
  - Next, Rich needs to firm up the budget and the subcommittee needs to meet.

**Neighborhood Planting Project, next steps**

- Rich said that Ken Neiman was informed that the Prospect St. neighborhood application was accepted.
  - The planting will be scheduled for the fall.
  - It has 6 setback planting locations, and the rest are under wire.
- Rich & Rob tagged 117 trees at Amherst Nursery.
- They are also planning some bare root purchases, hopefully about 30-35 for the spring plantings.
- Rich is waiting for the list of premium liners from Amherst Nursery.
- The next step is communication – perhaps a press release after Arbor Day.
- Rich will contact the other applicant with the results, and encourage them to reapply next year.

### **Arbor Day Preparations**

- Marilyn spoke about a number of things that have been done in the past for Arbor Day.
  - This year, she assumes they will be handing out tree whips, encouraging school participation in the DCR poster contest, and tree plantings in the suggested locations.
- Arbor Day will be celebrated on April 26 & 27.
- Tree Northampton will organize the whip distribution.
- Sue asked if something about volcano mulching could be worked into Arbor Day.
  - Marilyn suggested an informational letter on tree care, with an emphasis on volcano mulching. She stressed the need for an educational campaign.
  - Jen suggested that a side demonstration on volcano mulching be set up at the whip distribution site.
  - Rich suggested that volcano mulching be addressed separate from Arbor Day.
  - Marilyn will bring proposals for volcano mulching education to the next meeting.
- Marilyn volunteered to be the overall organizer for Arbor Day.
- Todd suggested that Tree Northampton explore a fund raising component to Arbor Day.

### **Natural gas infrastructure expansion and impact on trees**

- Lilly spoke about Dr. Steve Jones of Florence efforts to educate the Boards of Health in Massachusetts to make official cautionary statements on the effects of natural gas.
- There is the potential for Tree Boards to talk about the effects of gas leaks on trees and make public statements about transitioning from natural gas to other energy sources.
  - She would like to draft a letter that the Boards could submit.
  - Todd encouraged the PSTC in moving forward on this, but suggested that it should go to the Mayor.
  - Lilly will bring a draft to the PSTC.
  - Marilyn stated that she supported the idea of the PSTC taking a leadership role on this.

### **Tree Northampton update**

- Sue reported that she was working on Saturday organizing and getting the volunteers out.
  - She is looking forward to laying out the rest of the Saturday pruning dates.
- Rich reported that the Tuesday prunings on Village Hill were moving along.
- Wednesday, the pruning group was back in Pulaski Park, a highly visible location.
  - They are pruning trees that are up to 6” in diameter.

- Kristine volunteered to help, and Greg from Bartlett Tree had volunteered at the last meeting.

**Projects with loose ends - - identifying next steps**

- Commemorative/carbon off-set tree planting program:
  - Look Park has a Commemorative Tree Planting program - Rich is contacting Justin Pelis at Look Park to get some language on it.
  - He would like to label our trees, especially the notable ones.
    - He also suggested commemorating people who have passed away with a plaque on the trees, mentioning in particular those that have passed due to the opioid crisis.
    - A virtual wall on the website was also suggested.
    - Marilyn will work with Rich on this.
    - Kristine suggested looking into the “Plants Map” website.
- Lawn signs re. volcano mulching:
  - Lilly sees the sign idea as having value – a visible public campaign.
  - Rich asked about budgeting for it, and suggested that the signs be put out with the signs for free trees as an educational approach.
  - Marilyn also suggested an article in the Daily Hampshire Gazette.

**Any other business not anticipated by Chair**

- Marilyn asked about the grant proposal – Lilly responded the awards have not yet been made.

**To-do List re-cap**

- Lilly – either she or Rich will contact Councilor LaBarge about Ward 6 plantings. The subcommittee will work on the 2020 planting plan. She will work on the natural gas draft letter, and help on Tree Speak with Madeleine.
- Sue – will get Greg, Kristina, and Lilly on the Saturday pruning list, and work with Marilyn on Arbor Day.
- Todd – will work on public shade tree protection and preservation language for insertion into current code structure and permit structure at the DPW.
- Rich – will email poster contest information to the school principals, email the Munroe St. neighborhood about their application, get the Arbor Day whip list for the next meeting, work with Marilyn on the commemorative tree signs, and look into the cost of volcano mulching signs. Either Lilly or Rich will contact Councilor LaBarge.
- Jen – will contact the YMCA about Arbor Day plantings, wait for an email about the site selection subcommittee, and work on connecting with the Chicopee planner.
- Rob – will continue pruning and work on better organization of the educational aspect of pruning.
- Marilyn – will work with Sue on Arbor Day planning, Rich on the next steps re: commemorative trees, and possibly a subcommittee meeting.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn	Todd Ford	Rob Postel	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.