

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

May 1, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Beth Willard

Meeting Called to Order

Lilly Lombard, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

Members present and absent/introductions:

| Member | Present | Time if arriving late or leaving early |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Lilly Lombard, Chair | X | |
| Todd Ford, Vice Chair | X | Arrived 5:16 PM |
| Molly Hale | X | |
| Jennifer Werner | X | |
| Marilyn Castriotta | Absent | |
| Rob Postel | X | |
| Susan Lofthouse | X | |
| Staff & Visitors | Present | Time if arriving late or leaving early |
| Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden | X | |
| Beth Willard, DPW Clerk | X | |

Public Comment

- No public comment

Approval of previous minutes

- Minutes were read by commission members.

| Motion | Motion By: | Seconded By: | Vote: |
|--|-------------|---------------|------------------------|
| To approve April 18, 2019 minutes as amended | Jenn Warner | Sue Lofthouse | Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 0 |

Chair Report

- Lilly recognized & thanked the members for their hard work in the past year, and especially over the last week for Arbor Day activities.
- Todd Ford's term completion & resignation
 - He submitted his resignation to the Mayor, effective at the end of the fiscal year.
- She also announced that DCR had awarded full funding (\$30,000) on the grant application.
 - We are the only community to receive more than a \$20,000 grant from them.
 - The grant lasts until June of 2020.

Tree Warden Report

- Rich mentioned that the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association Executive Board will be meeting at 10:30 AM May 8 at Lilly Library.

- This will be followed by a tree planting ceremony in Park St. Cemetery at 11:30.
- Lunch will be at JJ's Tavern after the tree planting.
 - Anyone interested in attending the luncheon should contact Rich.
- He received an \$8,000 mitigation check from Habitat for Humanity for the trees on Glendale Rd.
- Rich reported that 63 trees had been planted in a week, of which 59 were bare root trees.
- He is putting together a master list – the current data is scattered in multiple locations.
 - Karen and Rich are working on a team drive on Google for the PSTC, which can be a repository for data.
- He has received a couple of requests for the Set Back brochure.

Draft Ordinance 18.231 discussion

- Rich distributed the latest version worked out with Carolyn Misch.
 - This version still has to go to Alan Seewald for review.
- For replacing trees, Molly worked out calculations for the number of 1” trees that would fill a 20” circle representing a 20” diameter tree – a total of 40.
 - Replacement of trees does not consider the leaf canopy, only the volume of the tree trunk.
- Lilly noted changes made in this version.
 - On the first page: Allowed by right – roof and accessory ground mount systems to 12 KW.
 - A limit to exclude commercial operation in those zones was desired, and a 2 acre limit for a permit was settled on, referenced on page 3 in #6.
 - Areas above 2 acres in these zones generally would not receive a permit.
 - Pockets of development within these zones could receive a permit.
 - The zones listed are mostly located in the western part of Northampton.
- Molly found the calculations in 3A and 3D possibly redundant and confusing.
- Molly questioned if the goal was to restrict large scale PV developments in Northampton.
 - Lilly believes it is, as research is showing a PV heat island effect that is more dramatic than an urban heat island.
- Lilly would like to see the same restrictions applied to residential development, so these regulations are no stricter than that of other types of development.

| Motion | Motion By: | Seconded By: | Vote: |
|--|------------|---------------|------------------------|
| To approve the ordinance as amended in this copy of the ordinance. | Molly Hale | Sue Lofthouse | Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0 |

- Lilly also would like to strengthen the Significant Tree Ordinance, using the same model.

Arbor Day Debrief

- Sue noted the heroic effort everyone put in to make the event come off so well.
- 59 bare root trees were planted from Wednesday through Sunday.
- Almost 500 whips were given out.
- There were more than 50 volunteers working the event, and many did more than one shift.
 - A number of political hopefuls and members of government attended and/or volunteered.
- They went out into Ward 7, and found there was a lot of interest there.

- Molly felt the whole thing was well organized.
 - Sue saw leadership as the key.
- Jenn said that planting bare root trees was significantly different from other plantings, there were lots of questions, and everyone learned a lot.
 - Todd was impressed – the bare root plantings he saw were all planted perfectly.
 - Rob noted that a key factor was the support of the DPW, who were right there when needed with mulch and water.
 - He mentioned that the hard work and budget considerations of the DPW were appreciated by the PSTC.
 - Lilly suggested thank you notes to the DPW director might be in order.
- Sue said she will need more people for Saturday’s planting on Trumbull Rd.
- Lilly asked about the letters that went out to the landscaping/tree companies.
 - Rich said there was no response.
- Lilly felt the tree tour went well, and would like to expand it.
 - Forbes Library thought it was great.
 - NPR covered it.
 - Madeleine was really pleased with the response.
- Rob pointed out the enormous effort required to run planting simultaneously with Arbor Day.
 - One alternative is next year, do plantings on Earth Day and whip handouts on Arbor Day.

Other Regulation Issues

- Trench Permit Tree Protection Language
 - Molly felt a balance was needed between the actual replacement cost and what is politically do-able.
 - Rob felt that the leaf crown might be more important in the formula than the trunk diameter, but quantifying it is much more difficult.
 - Lilly pointed out currently the replacement for a 24” tree is \$2,160.
 - The formula puts it at \$5,700 or 57 1” trees.
 - If the formula did not max out at 20”, then the 24” tree would require 576 1” trees or an ungodly sum of money.
 - Rich pointed out that all of it will be passed to Alan Seewald for his comments.
 - Todd recommended to go with what we have, and perhaps support it with the analysis.

Tree Commission website review and proposed edits

- Todd felt it needed review, and asked everyone to check it out and suggest improvements.
 - He also wanted to know if there was additional material that needed to be on it.
- Lilly noted that there was some duplication of materials, suggesting materials that refer to things in the purview of the Tree Warden be split off to his page.
 - The PSTC page should be items such as minutes, agendas, the 5 year plan, 1 year plan and a map showing what has been worked on.
- Sue noted that the website is hard to use.
- Rich suggested that a template of changes desired be created, and he can then get it to the DPW Director and feed to Karen to put on the website.

- Molly asked about the Davey Tree survey, which Lilly said is located on the Tree Warden page.

Presentation of Annual Tree Planting Prioritization Plan and Map

- Todd felt it needed to be condensed into a single document with a map and priorities of the year, so it can be easily displayed on a website and printed as a handout, and the information is easily digested.
- Lilly mentioned the need for an annual summary/year in review sort of thing to cover FY2019.
 - Rich mentioned that he had done a 3 year summary for Director LaScaleia.

Natural Gas reader purchase update and associated Enforcement/Notice Policy

- Rich is still working on getting in touch with the company to order.
- Todd felt there is a need to think about how data collected is used and tracking that chain of use.
 - He also questioned if and how we notify the utility of a leak when found.
 - The city should consider what the policy is, how it is enforced, and what the penalties will be.
- Lilly suggested creating a subgroup to explore these issues.
 - Todd and Jenn will be part of the subgroup.

Tree Northampton update

- Sue noted that planting season is here, but that there was nothing additional to report.

To-do List re-cap

- Lilly – reminded everyone to check the website. She will send a thank you to Donna LaScaleia, check with the Sunday planting group, prepare a summary for City Council, and send an endorsement of the draft to the Planning Dept.
- Molly - will do the same thing for the 2018 plantings that she prepared for previous years, and sort by native/non-native.
- Sue – will send a thank you to Donna LaScaleia, check the website, and email Molly & Jenn about Saturday.
- Rob – will plant trees and focus on getting repeat volunteers.
- Todd – will get the trench permit language changes to Alan Seewald for his comments, start in on the natural gas policy, and check the website.
- Rich – will order the gas detector, check the website, edit the draft for the trench permit, and plant with Rob.
 - He also reminded the PSTC of the Tree City Ceremony on May 29, 2019.
 - He can bring guests, and will email the flyer to everyone.
- Jen – will check the website, plant trees, text Sue, and send a thank you to Donna LaScaleia.

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| Motion | Motion By: | Seconded By: | Vote: |
| To adjourn | Sue Lofthouse | Jenn Werner | Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0 |

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM.