

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

June 5, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by: Beth Willard

Meeting Called to Order

Lilly Lombard, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:35 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	
Todd Ford, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	X	
Jennifer Werner	X	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	
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	
Rosie Li, Public	X	

Public Comment

- Rosie Li, an international student at Smith College, complimented the PSTC on its work. She is working on her senior thesis, and is volunteering with both Sue & Rob’s tree planting groups.

Approval of previous minutes

- Minutes were read and amended by commission members.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve May 15, 2019 minutes as amended	Todd Ford	Rob Postel	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 1

Chair Report

- Summer schedule: July 3, Aug 7
 - The only meetings where a quorum can be established are on July 3 and August 7, so those are the only currently scheduled meetings.
- Recruiting/advertising new PSTC opening
 - Lilly approached George Kohout, who declined.
 - Molly approached Dillon Sussman, who felt he had a possible conflict, and wasn’t certain if he had enough time. Lilly will reach out to him.
- Website proposed edits, submit to Rich
 - People are still working on ideas to submit to Rich.

- Proposed big Tree Bike Tour
 - Lilly attended the Bike Breakfast.
 - She discussed the idea of a Big Tree Bike Tour and they are interested in it.
 - George Kohout responded that he has someone interested in co-organizing it.
 - It can be built on TreeSpeak, and we can potentially identify some great trees in Florence.
 - They are looking for a date.
 - The PSTC was in favor of the proposed tour.
 - Lilly will get the proposed dates and report back.

Tree Warden Report

- Tree City USA Award --report
 - Lilly, Marilyn, Jen and Rich attended.
 - Rich noted that there were 87 Tree City USA communities in Massachusetts.
 - This is the third year Northampton received a growth award.
 - The keynote speaker, Kevin Smith, spoke on the value of large mature trees.
 - DCR Commissioner Leo Roy urged Tree City communities to network with non-Tree City communities.
 - Lilly suggested developing a sister city relationship with Easthampton.
 - Rich, Mollie Freilicher and Alan Snow are working on getting multiple tree commission/committee and tree warden meetings sited in the western Massachusetts area, in an effort to tie all these groups together somehow, and perhaps spark more interest.
 - Gov. Baker was at the 20,000th tree planting ceremony.
 - He challenged communities to plant 20,000 more, and is committed to funding them.
 - Lilly cautioned against articulating trees as the sole tool as climate change protection or as an offset to biomass.

Updating the Significant Tree Ordinance

- Todd said it was currently in a holding pattern, pending review by the City attorney of the formula used – the one also used for the Trench permit update.
 - Rich has not yet submitted the changes to the DPW director, as she is has been involved in FY2020 budget preparations for City Council.
 - Lilly asked Todd to put his suggestions in writing for the PSTC.

Climate Resilience Plan – inserting our recommendations into the plan

- Todd noted that trees are largely absent from the document – mentioned only briefly and in very general terms.
 - He sees the opportunity for the PSTC to add detail.
 - A caveat could be added to the section on solar arrays.
- Lilly will let Carolyn Misch know that the PSTC reviewed the document and would like the procedure for making recommendations.
 - Todd suggested referencing the urban forest and setting specific goals for a net gain year-to-year in the overall canopy and/or number of shade trees.
 - One possibility is inserting a reference to planting a certain number minimum of shade trees per year.

- He also suggested perhaps some regulatory changes, such as:
 - Requiring developers to plant more trees when they develop parcels,
 - Mandating/increasing the shade requirement for parking lots, which could be potentially waived if the parking lot goes solar, and
 - Encourage solar on rooftops and in parking lots.
- Todd noted that most goals were very broad and there were few specifics.
- Lilly asked Todd to put his suggestions in writing & forward them to the Commission.
- Lilly will get a timeline on this from Carolyn Misch.
- Rich suggested a letter to the Mayor instead of dealing directly with the Planning Dept., as the PSTC advises the Mayor.
- Lilly asked that everyone work on it before the July 3rd meeting.
- The Plan would become a chapter in the City’s Master Plan.

Election of officers

- Todd nominated Lilly for Chair, which was seconded by Marilyn; and Marilyn nominated Sue, which was seconded by Jenn.
 - As there were no other nominations, Lilly closed nominations and opened discussion.
 - The candidates discussed their qualifications, their role, and the role of the PSTC in the near future.
 - A vote on the Chair position was held, with Lilly garnering 5 votes and Sue 2 votes.
- Molly nominated Sue for Vice Chair, and Jenn seconded the nominations.
 - Todd moved that nominations be closed, and Molly seconded it.
 - As there were no other candidates, Sue was elected unanimously.

Planting/Tree Northampton planting

- Rob will be planting 10 trees this Saturday, leaving 10-15 in the nursery to be planted over the rest of the season.
- He mentioned 4 middle school students joined the Wednesday planting group on May 16.
 - Their participation is part of their class time that is dedicated to community service.
 - Rob sees it as very important to get them involved.
 - There is also a group of kids coming to plant on Saturday.
- Sue mentioned that she had a contact with the Ecology Club at Northampton High School, and will pursue that possibility for getting kids involved.

Lilly presented a card from the PSTC to Todd as a thank you for his service on the Commission.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn	Todd Ford	Molly Hale	Yes 7, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.