



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
URBAN FORESTRY COMMITTEE  
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019, 6:00 PM  
MINUTES

MEETING AT SOMERVILLE CITY HALL  
93 HIGHLAND AVENUE  
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

*DRAFT Meeting notes prepared by Malik Drayton*

**Committee Members in attendance:** Chris Dwan, Althea Northcross, Alden Johnson, Sharon Komarow, Vanessa Boukili (ex-officio, Senior Urban Forestry & Landscape Planner); Steven MacEachern (ex-officio, Tree Warden), Tori Antonino (arrived at 6:34 pm)

**Committee Members absent:** Jennifer Clifford, Amy Mertl

**Others in Attendance:** Malik Drayton (Urban Forestry & Landscape Planner), Jerry Lauretano, Gretchen Putnam, Clare Putnam

Chris Dwan called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm followed by introductions.

**New Business:**

1. Introductions/Quicks Updates/ Housekeeping (6:11pm)
  - a. Minutes
    - i. Boukili to send out list of who is in charge of minutes for the month
2. Communications / Open Meeting Law
  - a. No deliberating amongst quorum of people (6 people) outside of an official for anything that could be an agenda item – i.e. anything under the purview of the committee.
    - i. No discussion of the meeting outside of the meeting
  - b. Committee members are allowed to share facts with each other and are allowed to be on social media.
  - c. For all email correspondence among the group, always BCC all committee members to avoid accidental deliberations.
3. Mission of the Committee (6:22 pm)
  - a. Goals of this committee/ primary interests of committee members:
    - i. Tree preservation
    - ii. Learning

- iii. Environmentalism
  - iv. Personal/ professional interest/ public realm design
  - v. Greater good/ help the city make beneficial choices
  - vi. Community interest – being aware of tree strategies in the City and communicating these to the community
  - vii. Educate and engage the community
4. Planned Plantings / Removals (6:36pm)
- a. Spring 2019 citywide planting - 145 trees. Boukili shared list of tree planting locations.
    - i. Most current tree wells will be expanded
    - ii. What are we doing for soil?
      - 1. Native soil is best new soil can create a potting effect
      - 2. Fertilizer or bio-char
      - 3. No soil tests have been done – general sand, silt, clay observed
    - iii. Member Antonino suggests the creation of our own soil
      - 1. Leaves, loam, plant roots → Compost
      - 2. Complications - storage issues, spreading pests
      - 3. *Leaf litter soil creation topic tabled for future meeting- add to parking lot*
    - iv. Planting timeline = late June – July 2019
    - v. In addition to citywide planting, 66 trees planted on Beacon Street this Spring
  - b. Tree Removals
    - i. Boukili disseminated removal list of approximately 90 trees
    - ii. Stump removal discussed
      - 1. Conflict with underground utilities prevent some stumps from being pulling out which inhibits replanting
    - iii. Stumps are cut high for visibility and to avoid trip hazards
    - iv. West branch Library - 5 tree removals due to building addition and location
  - c. High School Project Removal
    - i. ~40 Trees are being removed for building & ADA compliance conflicts
5. Proposed Tree Preservation Ordinance (7:04pm)
- a. Public Tree Hearings at Urban Forestry Committee?
    - i. Time & space constraints
    - ii. Representative from UFC @ tree hearing?
    - iii. City to communicate tree hearing information to UFC
  - b. Private property permit process for the removal of trees
    - i. City employees can't go on private property
      - 1. How will this be enforced - can the authority to go on private property be created?
        - a. ISD has the authority to go on private property
    - ii. Applicant to provide written plan sharing which trees will be removed
      - 1. If site plans aren't created by landscape architect, not sure how useful they will be
    - iii. Exemption for 1-3 family homes
      - 1. Targets developers instead of owner-occupants
    - iv. Wavier can be requested
    - v. Community conversations about incentives (carrot rather than stick)
  - c. Tree Fund
    - i. Line item – Street Tree in the financial system
    - ii. Fund currently has about \$15,000, mostly from fines and donations

- d. Legal Cases related to similar tree ordinance (D.C)?
- e. Goal is to slow the loss of the mature trees in the City.
- f. Invasive Species
  - i. Do we encourage the removal of invasive species?
- g. What is the cost of administering and enforcing this ordinance?
- h. Proposed Tree Preservation Ordinance will be discussed at Legislative Matters on Monday
- 6. Proposed Native Species Ordinance (7:40 pm)
  - a. Concept presented by Antonio:
    - i. Ecological landscaping movement /trend
    - ii. Insect population concerns
      - 1. Habitat loss, pesticides, landscaping Trends
    - iii. Solve climate change
    - iv. 100% Native Species Proposed
      - 1. Examples with 100% native species: Butterfly garden at Morse-Kelley, The Growing Center
    - v. List of Native tree species that provides pollinator benefits:
      - 1. Oak
      - 2. Willow
      - 3. Cheery
      - 4. Birch
      - 5. Poplar
      - 6. Blueberry
      - 7. Maple
      - 8. Elm
      - 9. Pine
      - 10. Hickory
    - vi. Ordinance influenced by municipalities in MA (Newton, Lexington , Arlington), NJ & FL
    - vii. Balanced regeneration of species that were present before
  - b. Not all places can have only native species with the level of maintenance the city can provide
  - c. Educate homeowners
    - i. Growing Center doing outreach education
    - ii. Role of Urban Forestry Committee
  - d. GLX – Green Line Extension as a potential pollinator corridor
  - e. Nuances not discussed
    - i. Niche specialist vs generalist
    - ii. Functions that non-native species provide, including biodiversity
    - iii. Pest resistance
    - iv. Storm water runoff capture
- 7. Review/ Discuss Parking Lot (7:57pm)
  - Parking lot: Potential topics for future meetings (in no particular order)
    - ) Tree inventory updates and data collection
    - ) Planting, species, and tree care standards
    - ) Education and outreach
    - ) Website
    - ) Grants and fundraising

- ) Heritage tree program
  - ) Adopt-a-tree program
  - ) Connecting with other regional and national groups
  - ) Recognition program for exceptional tree stewardship by residents and businesses
  - ) Resident photo-essay on Somerville's Trees
  - ) Dog pee stations to reduce damage to public trees
  - ) Presentation / discussion on biodiversity and the importance of native plants
8. Any and all other business
- a. Tree Trimming questions
  - b. Approval of minutes May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019: *tabled*

**Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 8:04 pm [motion – Komarow, second – MacEachern, vote: 7:0:0].

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**List of Meeting Documents** (located here K:\OHCD\Shared\Transportation & Infrastructure\URBAN FORESTRY in Somerville\Urban Forestry Committee\Meeting Documents\

- Somerville UFC Agenda\_2019-June-20.pdf
- Somerville UFC Minutes\_2019-May-16\_DRAFT.docx
- Somerville Spring 2019 Planting List Locations COMPLETE – Leahy.xlsx
- June 2019 tree removal list.xlsx
- Tree Ordinance v9 Clean.pdf
- Tree Preservation v9 May30-compared to current TPO ordinance.docx
- Native Plant Ordinance.docx
- Native Species White Paper 2019\_FINAL

### **Parking lot**

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- ) Presentation / discussion on Biodiversity and the importance of native plants
- ) Leaf litter soil creation