

City of Northampton, MA
Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)

Date: March 3, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Submitted By: Beth A. Kaplowitt

Meeting Called to Order

Richard Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair called the meeting to order at 4:32 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	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	
Molly Hale	X	
Jennifer Werner	X	
Rob Postel	X	
David Lukens	X	
Staff & Visitors	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Beth A. Kaplowitt, DPW Clerk	X	
Jackie Ballance, Visitor	X	

Public Comment

- None.

Review/approve minutes of 1/25/21 & 2/17/21 meetings

- A motion was proposed and seconded and a roll call vote was taken.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To postpone the review of the January 25, 2021 meeting minutes until the next meeting & approve the minutes of the February 17, 2021 meeting.	Susan Lofthouse	Marilyn Castriotta	Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 2

Marilyn Castriotta said that she feels that if a UFC member leaves a meeting at the scheduled end time of the meeting, they should not be considered to be “leaving early” as shown in the “Members present and absent/introductions” table in the minutes. She suggested that if the meeting is not going to end at the scheduled time, either the agenda should be adjusted or the Chair should ask the members if the meeting can go beyond the scheduled end time. The Chair suggested that perhaps the topic could be added to a future Agenda for discussion.

Chair/Tree Warden Report

- Rich said that there are 30 different locations throughout the City that still need to be cleaned up from the recent (wind) storm. Most are private trees that fell into the public way.
- Rich attended a Main Street Re-Design meeting. There was lots of good feedback and discussion about how we got to where we are today. A landscape architect gave a lot of information about this. Rich will forward a link to a website where the architect has put a lot of very accessible data that can be viewed. There was lots of public comment. Some people had concerns about a perceived lack of information from City Hall, and many were concerned about the repercussions that could arise arrive if downtown goes down to one lane There will be many more public forums scheduled on this topic.
- The lower Pleasant Street project which goes from Hockanum Road to the roundabout is funded and will be going forward. There are small perennial planting areas in the tree belt. Rich asked Jen to give him a hand. He will send an electronic record to everyone.
- There are no PST hearings currently on the docket.

UFC 2021 Goals & Objectives

- The committee reviewed Molly Hale’s spreadsheet on Tree City Growth Award Activities in detail.
 - The members looked at each item on the spreadsheet and discussed whether they felt that it had been correctly prioritized.
 - Each member then confirmed or changed the projects for which they intended to participate.
 - The top two priorities are updating the STO (Rich has sent everyone a clean draft, which is still in progress.) and the publicity campaign (which will definitely be done).
 - Molly will try to reach Chris about the tree inventory for Leeds.
 - Molly & Chris will be identifying streets that are used as cut-throughs. These would be priorities for tree planting.
 - There was further discussion of the details of some of the goals, who is interested and committed to each project, how the projects have been prioritized, and if there were any other issues that should be added.
 - Molly asked that all the members make a list of what they’ve signed up for.
 - Susan said that she has been investigating open meetings rules. There was a discussion about open meeting rules, so that everyone would be able to avoid violations. This topic will be discussed further in the next meeting.

Significant Tree Ordinance (STO) & Two Family by Right Ordinance Update

- a) Significant Tree Ordinance (STO) Update
 - Everyone has reviewed the STO that Rich sent to them. David gave his opinion regarding which parts are the most important.
 - A motion was proposed and seconded, followed by a discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve changes to the STO, present it to Planning & Sustainability and then go to the Mayor for support.	Molly Hale	Susan Lofthouse	Yes 7, No 0, Abstain 0

- One possibility is to present it to Planning & Sustainability and then go to the Mayor for support.

- If Planning & Sustainability is not interested in presenting it, the UFC can reach out to the At-Large City Councilors.
- Jen suggested that the motion be amended.
- An amended motion was proposed and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To have Rich contact Planning & Sustainability to notify them that the UFC has come up with some amendments to the STO.	Susan Lofthouse	Molly Hale	Yes 7, No 0, Abstain 0

- Rich will send out the amendments to Planning & Sustainability. If a discussion is needed, a subcommittee meeting can then be scheduled.
- b) Two Family by Right Ordinance Update
- Rich said that there was a Community Resources meeting (a subcommittee of City Council) in which a discussion was held about this proposed Ordinance.
 - At tomorrow’s City Council meeting, there will be a first reading of the zoning package regarding the Two Family by Right Ordinance.
 - Rich and Carolyn had an email exchange about the details of the package.

Ongoing Projects Status

- a) Planting Plan Spring 2021
- There was no discussion.
- b) Downtown Tree Siting
- Molly said that she needs Marilyn and David’s maps so that they can be submitted. David replied that they are waiting for the snow to melt.
 - Rich said that he is working on this topic.

UFC Shared Calendar of Events

- There are lots of different meetings happening. Rich would like a shared calendar that everyone could see. Someone would have to do data management for it. He would like it to be a Google Calendar.
- Susan said that she would work on this with Rich.

Any other business not anticipated by the Chair

- Rob said that he is working with Tree Northampton regarding the value of the amount of carbon in a tree. He would like to invite a guest to a UFC meeting to speak about this.

To Do List

- There was no discussion.

A motion was proposed and seconded. Members voted “Yes” unanimously by raising their hands. There was no discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn.	Molly Hale	Rob Postel	Yes 7, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.