

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

March 6, 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:

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	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	Absent	

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 February 20, 2019 minutes as amended	Todd Ford	Molly Hale	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0

Chair Report

- Update on gas leaks meeting on 3/4 with Bob Ackley
 - The Tree Warden was unable to attend, but Kristina Bezanson was in attendance.
 - There was a discussion of the effects of gas leaks on tree decline and how they look as they decline.
 - They did a loop around a small area of Northampton with Mr. Ackley’s detection equipment and found a leak in the area of the YMCA – one of the locations for Arbor Day plantings.
 - Leaks have also been detected on Stoddard St.
 - Lilly felt it demonstrates the importance of monitoring this.
 - Mr. Ackley offered support should the Commission get the equipment.
 - There was some discussion about what he could do at the state level, as well as how some of the information could be incorporated into Kristina’s teaching programs.

- There was interest in having Rick Harper incorporate the information into his webinar program.
- Lilly had tea with Mollie Freilicher.
 - Mollie is inquiring about the amount of forest that has been converted into non-forest for the purpose of solar arrays.
 - She found there was no one at the state level tracking this.
- UMass Conference
 - Rich, Rob, Madeleine, and Lilly attended the annual Urban Forestry Conference.
 - One talk considered how, in the Washington D.C. area, the presence of non-native trees affected the insect population that Chickadees fed on, and therefore were affecting the sustainability of the Chickadee population.
 - The speaker concluded that municipalities should strive for no more than 30% of the trees being non-native in order to maintain this population.
 - Lilly suggested that it might be useful for the Commission to sort the trees in TreeKeeper by native (Eastern U.S.) vs. non-native to see what the percentage is.
 - Rob felt that most of what was discussed at the conference the PSTC was somewhat aware of already, and it confirmed the PSTC was on the right track.
 - Rob & Rich also connected with the Tree Warden from Springfield and were planning to visit his nursery.

Tree Warden Report

- There was a tremendous amount of wind damage in the storm recently.
 - There were 48 different tree failures, both public and private (includes only those private trees that come down on public ways).
 - These were mainly pines.
 - The majority of the damage was from the center of Florence and going west.
 - Rich expects the cleanup will extend at least 1 ½ to 2 weeks more.

Ordinance revision updates

- Todd reported that the Planning Board was still working on the revision and had not gotten back to the PSTC yet.
- He also noted that he is working on the Public Shade Tree protections to be inserted in the existing DPW Driveway Permit and Trench Permit process.
 - A draft was forwarded to Rich and Lilly.
 - The protections were taken mostly from the ordinance he had previously crafted.
 - He would like the city attorney to look it over before proceeding much further.
 - He did insert the idea of payment in lieu of planting a replacement that had been originally suggested for the solar ordinance, but scaled it up a bit, with a cost calculation per inch.
- Todd suggested perhaps it was time to take a look at the Significant Tree Ordinance and maybe update it.

Arbor Day Preparations

- Lilly showed the draft TreeSpeak walking tour brochure Madeleine is working on and requested feedback.

- Karyn and Madeleine worked on the map for it.
- It still needs a bit more work.
- It will be available at places like the Senior Center, Forbes Library, and City Hall.
- Sue emailed the principals about setting up something for the poster contest for next year.
- Marilyn has the letters ready for mailings to landscapers.
 - Rich sent Marilyn an updated list of landscapers & contractors for mailings.
- Rich ordered the whips for distribution at City Hall.
- Lilly would like to get a timeline in place for the Arbor Day preparations.
 - She was thinking about doing press release for the 3rd week in March.
 - Rich suggested that the Mayor should do a press release on the Monday before the event.
 - Lilly suggested doing a photo op of putting up labels on the trees on April 19th.
 - Seven volunteers are scheduled for April 27th.
 - Jen suggested the YMCA Young Leader Club work at the planting there.
 - Rich will contact the gas company about the gas leak at the YMCA location.
 - Sue will ask Alicia if she would like to do some materials again for Arbor Day, such as the buttons she did in the past that were a huge hit.
 - These would be located at the whip distribution site at City Hall.
 - Rich is looking at starting about 8 AM for the plantings.

Subcommittee Report

- Rob & Rich met briefly & reviewed the plan for planting at the YMCA and the Cahill Apartments.
 - For the YMCA, Princeton Elms are to be planted on the parking lot side of the berm as close to the parking lot as possible, with perhaps some understory plantings interspersed among them.
 - Princeton Elms are also planned for the Cahill Apartments area, again perhaps with some understory plantings.
 - Rob and Rich will be meeting with the Housing Director tomorrow at 10 to go over the planting proposal and hash out the agreement and any other issues.
 - They will be doing the same with the YMCA.
 - Rich is waiting to hear on the status of the Elms that will be coming from Chestnut Hill Nursery in Buffalo, as at the present it is still unknown how many Elms will be available to plant at each location on Arbor Day.
 - Jen had a positive response from the YMCA, and Rich will be in touch with them to iron out the details.

Tree Northampton update

- Sue reported that pruning work was concentrated on Village Hill.
 - Sue has been organizing Saturdays, Paul Thayer has been organizing Wednesdays, and Mindy has been organizing Tuesdays using the doodle poll.
 - She combined all the lists together, and everyone is using the doodle poll for all three days.
 - Mindy is administering the doodle poll.
 - They are pruning a lot of larger older trees, which is slow work.

- Some trees are 6” to 8” and 20+ ft. tall, making them difficult to do.
 - They are using ladders to prune.
- Hopefully Village Hill can be completely done before they have to move on to another area.

Any other business not anticipated by Chair

- Lilly mentioned that the 2 Degrees neighborhood group from the gas leak meeting want to be invited to a future PSTC meeting to discuss and share the knowledge gained and future steps.
 - She will reach out to them to arrange it.

To-do List re-cap

- Molly – will work on the native non-native tree percentages on the spreadsheet from Rob.
- Sue – will get the name of the YMCA Youth Leader Club adult coordinator from Jen, talk to Alicia about Arbor Day, get an Arbor Day broadcast email out, and get a carbon neutral article she found to Rob.
- Jen – will send Sue the name of the YMCA Youth Leader Club adult coordinator.
- Rob – will send Molly the excel sheet.
- Rich – will continue to work on tree orders, connect with the YMCA, meet with the Housing Authority tomorrow about the potential site plan for the Cahill Apartments, talk to the DPW director about purchasing a gas leak detection meter, and continue to work with Todd on the tree protection amendments to the DPW permit forms.
- Todd – will work on amending the existing DPW permit forms to include Public Shade Tree protections, and sit down with the City attorney to go over them.
- Lilly - will invite 2 Degrees neighborhood group to a future meeting, remind Lee Pouliot that he is scheduled for the next meeting, prepare a press release for Arbor Day, and help Madeleine with the brochure.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn	Sue Lofthouse	Molly Hale	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.