



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
*OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*  
KATJANA BALLANTYNE  
MAYOR

THOMAS GALLIGANI  
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Urban Forestry Committee Meeting**  
**JANUARY 19, 2023 4:30PM**  
**MINUTES**

**Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting was held remotely**

A recording of the meeting can be accessed here:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/4622337416151656535>

*Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili*

**Committee Members in attendance:** Tori Antonino (Co-Chair), Chris Dwan (Co-Chair), Jennifer Clifford, Leah Grossman, Murphy Langevin, Vanessa Boukili (Senior Urban Forestry and Landscape Planner), Malik Drayton (Tree Warden designee), Amy Mertl (arrived late)

**Committee Members absent:** Breck Miller (Tree Warden)

**Others in Attendance:** Anne Ryan, Denis and Denise Stacke, Hunter Gates, Matthew Carlino, Max Meinhold, Wig Zamore, Logan Brill, Claire O'Neill

**Call to Order:** Antonino called meeting to order at 4:34 pm

1. Introductions / Housekeeping
2. Resident Concerns
  - a. Matthew Carlino - Gilman Square – looking at Green Streets etc. in other communities. Stormwater planning and design with landscape architecture. Working on drafting a green streets ordinance. Could present about this at a future meeting, and other city departments and working groups.
    - i. Dwan – cross cutting many departments. Perhaps some of this conversation could happen in our committee.
    - ii. Clifford – useful for forum or place for conversation to happen. Bigger picture.
    - iii. Boukili – some larger projects already incorporate green infrastructure – SAUCI, Spring Hill Sewer Separation, etc. Mobility, Engineering, PSUF, sometimes Capital Projects. UFC good place for some discussions, but also useful to have conversations with other departments during normal business hours.
    - iv. Matt – other options for retrofitting existing streets. There are intersections across divisions, but definitely a place for discussion here.
    - v. Antonino – would like to invite you to a future meeting to talk more about it.



- b. Anne Ryan – re: 90 Washington Street site. Planning department divides green space into three different plots of land. Does Somerville Redevelopment Authority have a mandate about environmental standards, and if so are they being adhered to?
  - i. Dwan – different arms of City have different regulations and documents. Somervision – intent and standards, but provides guidance not regulations. Does not have binding authority.

### 3. Updates from City

#### a. City Tree Removals

- i. No planned removals have happened since last meeting. One tree was hit by a truck and will need to be removed soon.
- ii. New contract for pruning and removals. Some pruning work is going on now, removals upcoming. Pruning work now. Removals coming soon, Miller will send list.
- iii. Tree hearing January 5<sup>th</sup> – Powder House Alewife Brook intersection – 6 or so trees will be removed soon (a few on DCR property, a few on Powder House Boulevard). Also 1 tree on College Ave that was hit by a vehicle. Removals will happen soon.
- iv. Clifford: tree damaged by vehicles, etc. – insurance recovery. Who assesses damage?
  - 1. Boukili – Tree Warden Miller will inspect the tree (or Boukili or Drayton if Miller unavailable). Police report also filed, needed for insurance recovery process. Insurance company assesses tree too.
- v. Dwan: Insurance company payment for removal/replacement – is it linked to diameter?
  - 1. Boukili: yes, provide money for number of trees to replace based on caliper inches lost. Cost of buying the tree, not the cost of planting and maintenance.
- vi. Antonino - Reusing parts of trees? Start thinking about it.
  - 1. Clifford – some companies might buy or take wood to reuse it.

#### b. Private Tree Removal Permit(s) and Exception(s)

- i. Drayton – spreadsheet is up to date through today. Reviewed 2022 numbers – 107 trees were permitted for removal. 100 trees will be replanted. 95 trees were exempt. Received \$17,000 to Tree Fund.
- ii. So far in 2023 – 5 trees exempt. 3 permit applications in process.
- iii. Reviewed most recent exemptions (Dwan screenshared private tree removal spreadsheet.)

#### c. Fall Tree Planting

- i. Done! 195 trees in ground.
- ii. Starting to work on IFB for Spring/Fall 2023.
- iii. Somerville Ave across from Mossland – cannot plant trees – DigSafe conflicts.
  - 1. Grossman – maybe some other things there? Planters, raised beds, etc.?
  - 2. Clifford – would be useful to do something that could not only provide shade, but also buffer – pollution and particulates as well as noise.

#### d. Somerville Pollinator Action Plan

- i. Received 50 applications for SPAP Advisory Committee. Delay in getting started due to staff turnover.
- ii. Quick message to applicants would be good.

#### e. Native Planting Ordinance Report

- i. Boukili shared a draft report. All requirements are being met, most are significantly exceeded.

- ii. Clifford – Healy plantings.
- iii. Antonino – yay, native planting ordinance is making a difference.

**f. Quincy Street Open Space**

- i. Boukili - will get answers to questions for our next meeting.

**4. Staying informed on Urban Forestry related job postings and RFPs**

- a. Antonino - Ecological Restoration Planner position is now closed. How to not miss opportunities in future.
- b. Grossman - saw that it was posted on Somerville newsletter. Could include this in housekeeping to bring it to front of mind.
- c. Dwan – many open positions at any one time. How to limit what type of jobs we discuss. PSUF, OSPCD, Horticulturalist, Parks, Parks Maintenance, UF Planning, RFPs. Suggest making a standing agenda item. Dwan and Tori will look at job posting and RFPs prior to each meeting.

**5. Use of Pesticides at Maxwell's Green**

- a. Antonino – going to write letter for developers who maintain POPS, and will share with Maxwells Green. No updates. Add to SSAPP agenda.

**6. Ongoing Work Updates**

**a. Adopt-a-Tree Program**

- i. Similar to last year. Full-force program in February. Generally same as last year, with a few modifications (ex. communication).

**b. Outreach & Arbor Day Poster Contest**

- i. Poster Contest – 5<sup>th</sup> graders. How to make it more enticing? Sent email to 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to come to classroom and do an activity about trees. Two teachers are interested. Have some activity ideas, and will also leave students some time to start on poster. Posters due in March, so activities in February. Any others interested? Tarsha was a teacher, is interested. Antonino is interested. Claire mentioned that Earthwise Aware has some activity material.

**c. Species Selection and Planting Protocol**

- i. Large list of stuff to do. Will update next meeting.

**d. Tree Preservation Ordinance**

- i. Dwan – spoken with Climate Coalition of Somerville and Green and Open Somerville. Will continue discussions.
- ii. Boukili – suggest meeting with City Staff (Miller, Drayton, Boukili).
- iii. Clifford – youth member requirements.
- iv. Dwan - Goal to have details and larger conversation here.

**e. Somerville's Most Wanted Weeds**

- i. Mertil – still needs to update draft; can discuss next meeting.

**f. GLX Corridor Greening**

- i. What is status?
  - 1. Boukili – no updates from City.
- ii. Wig – project has not yet been handed over. T vs. Commuter Rail vs Amtrak vs. City of Somerville. Will likely happen soon. Recommend keep eyes on it over the next year. MBTA rider oversight committee – mostly transportation enthusiasts. Also on MassPort committee. Important to have Somerville have increased friendly control over these things in next decade.
- iii. Dwan – ideally would be a connected environmental corridor.
- iv. Wig - Amber Christopherson – was with MyRWA but now in charge of all paths in the state (DCR).
- v. Dwan – how much space are we dealing with? Width and length of sections.
  - 1. Wig will dig up this information and share.

2. MBTA tree oversight. Federally required reviews of every rail corridor depending on tree growth.

- vi. Antonino – would like Viola to come to meeting or get an update. Antonino will reach out. Dwan will partner.
- vii. Boston MPO – usually funder of paths and path work. May be interesting to have someone from Central Transportation Planning staff come to future meeting to present about projects funded through Boston MPO. Includes surface transportation and analysis funding.

7. **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings**

- a. December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Roll call vote to approve meeting minutes** (move to approve: Clifford, Dwan second)

Yay: Boukili, Clifford, Mertl, Dwan, Grossman, Langevin, Antonino

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Motion unanimously passes at 6:34 pm.

8. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm