



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

THOMAS GALLIGANI
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Urban Forestry Committee Meeting
APRIL 20, 2023 4:30PM
MINUTES

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting was held remotely

A recording of the meeting can be accessed here:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/6538837862423561813>

Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili

Committee Members in attendance: Chris Dwan (Co-Chair), Tori Antonino (Co-Chair), Amy Mertl, Calla Taylor, Dorothy Suput, Jennifer Clifford, Leah Grossman, Vanessa Boukili (Senior Urban Forestry and Landscape Planner), Breck Miller (Tree Warden)

Committee Members absent: Murphy Langevin

Others in Attendance: Malik Drayton (City of Somerville PSUF), Kalyani Lawrence, Emma Vivino, Anne Ryan

Call to Order: Dwan called meeting to order at 4:33 pm

1. Introductions / Housekeeping

- a. Introduce new UFC members Calla Taylor and Dorothy Suput
- b. UFC member introductions.

2. Resident Concerns

- a. Anne Ryan – Cobble Hill. Group of tenants demonstrating weekly. Will be at City Council meeting Thursday, April 27th. Will ask for preservation of existing parking, trash removal space, berm, and trees. UFC advice about what City Council needs to hear? Have 5 minutes. Long-term value of park for the city.
 - i. Antonino – recommend resubmit UFC letter re: trees at 90 Washington Street.
 - ii. Clifford – UFC support on tree aspect. Letter explains our position.
 - iii. Reviewed prior UFC 90 Washington Street memo as a group to send to City Council along with this additional one-sentence statement created during meeting: “The Urban Forestry Committee remains committed in our support for the city to retain the trees at 90 Washington Street, as described in our memo originally approved on January 20, 2022.”



iv. **Role call vote to approve submission of above statement and memo to City Council**

1. Yay: AM, BM, CT, CD, JC, LG, VB, TA, DS
2. Nay: none
3. Abstain: none

Motion unanimously passes at 4:56 pm.

- v. Dwan or Antonino will convey this information to City Clerk

3. **Updates from City**

a. **City Tree Removals**

- i. Miller: sent list of about 40 removals upcoming for next few weeks. A few updates since then, will send out revised list. All dead/dying/hazardous trees.
- ii. List includes remaining moderate risk trees that need to come down because public safety. Future lists will be lower priority tree removals (small trees, or declining trees but not high priority).
- iii. All trees have been posted for removal – now flyer tree instead of letters to abutters. Orange paper on tree stating that tree will be removed.
- iv. Tree hearing not required for trees that are dead/dying/hazardous.
- v. Antonino – can leave parts of trees in parks, etc. as habitat?
 1. Miller – all trees inspected. They are a safety risk. These are all street trees. Will consider leaving parts of trees in appropriate situations.
- vi. Tree hearing coming up next Thursday, April 27th.
 1. Clifford: Could any of these trees be relocated? Like the Colorado Blue Spruce?
 - a. Miller: It is too big to relocate. Do not have a tree spade, and location issues.
 2. Suput: what is a tree hearing?
 - a. Miller: prior to removing any healthy public shade tree, must to go through tree hearing process. It is a public meeting with specific notification requirements, per Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87. If any formal objection is made, then the tree cannot be removed unless the mayor signs off on it.

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

- i. Drayton: Tree removal sheet needs some updating. Various permits pending, waiting for further information. 8 Berkeley Steet – 26-inch tree, replanting 28 inches. 33 Porter Street. 156 Albion Street from 2022, replanting.
- ii. Exemptions – 11 Fennel Road, Craigie Street (pending), Matignon High School.
- iii. Grossman – for properties that are replanting – can you share UFC recommendation list?
 1. Drayton – yes can share list. Cannot require certain species, but can provide it as a resource.
- iv. Suput – what is UFC role. What is process?
 1. Dwan – 2019 Tree Preservation Ordinance included Private Tree Removal Permit Process. To remove a significant tree 8” diameter or greater (not invasive, not hazardous), must apply for a tree removal permit. If 3 family or less, waiver to replanting/repayment. Otherwise, need to replant same #

caliper inches removed, or pay into tree fund (current rate is \$600 per inch caliper). Tree warden or designee to process permits, and to inform UFC.

2. Dwan drafted support letter for Tree Crew. Shared draft. Miller suggested wait one month.

c. Spring Tree Planting

- i. Boukili – planting at least 175 trees this season. Leahy Landscaping is our contractor. Shared species list. 1st list of sites has been identified, still marking out other sites.
- ii. Mertl – Re: Adopt a tree – are these new sites on the list?
 1. Boukili – no, not yet. Will try to tag them as I check on them, though.
- iii. Antonino – Amelanchier? Striped maple as our unicorn?
 1. Contractor did not have Amelanchier available. I have never seen striped maple on a nursery list.
- iv. Spring Hill – have money from 599 Somerville Ave developer to plant 10 trees in area each year. Need to arrange SPSS community meeting – how to inform people?
 1. City Councilors, various lists (Grossman, Crystal). Boukili to set up meeting, and send to UFC.

d. Prospect Hill Wedding Nook

- i. Antonino – updates? Genetically wild origin plants.
- ii. Same plan – DPW plant, work with PSUF to order plants. Have stressed wild type plants.

e. Somerville Pollinator Action Plan Advisory Committee

- i. Boukili – first meeting of Advisory Committee was held. Details of process, documents, and meetings on Somervoice page:

<https://voice.somervillema.gov/somerville-pollinator-action-plan>

4. Urban Forestry related job postings and RFPs

- a. Dwan – nothing very relevant
- b. Drayton – Conservation Commissioner vacancy
- c. Groundwork Somerville

5. Arbor Day Planning

- a. Plant giveaway
 - i. Arbor Day seedlings (grey dogwood as shrub, in addition to flowering dogwood).
 - ii. Milkweed – maybe 10 flats (500 seedlings). *Asclepius tuberosa*, *Asclepius incarnata*. Common milkweed is assertive, maybe 1 flat.
 - iii. Littleblue stem – a few flats
 - iv. Can put extras in bumpouts on Beacon?
 - v. Clifford offered to hand out seedlings.
- b. Invite Mayor and City Councilor.
- c. Kids activities in works. Seed balls. Leaf stencils are broken. Maybe need new activities. New leaf tracing activity? FAB lab at high school may be able to remake the stencils. Taylor will look into it.
- d. Crystal – May 20th MAMAs garbage to garden 10-2pm. Seedling swap 12-2. Union square farmers market until 1-1:30. Extra seedlings: at least 2 gardens low maintenance, prioritize natives and pollinators. Extra stuff could go there.
- e. Lesley graduation May 20th.
- f. Saturday May 20 1-3 or Sunday May 21st between 10-1. See if Mayor is available either day/time. If so, chose that.
- g. ROOT banner – Clifford can bring. Noted that it would be better to have updated map.

6. Ongoing Work Updates

- a. **Adopt-a-Tree Program**
 - i. Clifford: maps and sign-up sheet for tagging coming soon.
 - b. **Outreach**
 - i. Clifford: tabling events are turning out to be effective to getting the word out and engaging people. Most tree adoption happens in May, just after event.
 - ii. Somerstreets Carnival June 7th or Farmers Markets to apply for. June 3, 10, 17, 24.
 - iii. Mertl – great idea. Carnival great event for this. It's in East Somerville.
 - 1. Clifford: 2-6pm. Will send out poll to see who is available.
 - iv. MAMAs table at Farmers Market. Could share with UFC. No specific dates yet, but can coordinate.
 - c. **Species Selection and Planting Protocol**
 - i. Grossman - native species recommendation list draft is ready! Will send out for final review and approval next meeting. Includes trees, shrubs, perennials.
 - d. **Use of Pesticides at Maxwell's Green** – *no update*
 - e. **Tree Preservation Ordinance**
 - i. Clifford - working group for youth membership is meeting on May 1st.
 - f. **Somerville's Most Wanted Weeds** - *no update*
 - g. **GLX Corridor Greening** – *no update*
- ## 7. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings
- a. March 16th, 2023
 - i. Amendment: strike Clifford's name from attendee list

Roll call vote to approve meeting minutes as amended:

Yay: Mertl, Miller, Taylor, Dwan, Clifford, Grossman, Boukili, Antonino

Nay: none

Abstain: Suput

Motion passes at ~6:25 pm.

8. Questions:

- a. Suput: Why using Go-To Meeting? Why aren't meetings in person?
 - i. Dwan: Go-To is official platform of the City. Will be moving to Zoon soon. Virtual because convenient. Can discuss at next meeting.
 - b. Taylor: Minutes rotation. How do it?
 - i. Dwan offered to do it together. Basically make notes in agenda with what happened during meeting.
 - ii. Boukili re-formats and fills in info as needed.
- ## 9. Adjourn:
- Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm (motion: Dwan, second: Grossman)