



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

THOMAS GALLIGANI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Urban Forestry Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, October 16, 2025**  
**MINUTES**

**Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting was held remotely**

***Meeting notes prepared by Doris Jenkins and Vanessa Boukili***

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Michael Hendrix (chair), Doris Jenkins, Luca Choly, Tori Antonino, David Jackson, Vanessa Boukili, Suzanne Warner (joined around 4:52 pm)

**Associate Members Present:** Allison Bernard

**Committee Members Absent:** Joelle Renstrom, Leah Grossman, Marion Davis, vacant

**Others in Attendance:** Anne Ryan, Cortney Kirk, Eugenie Hainsworth, Perry McDonald

**Call to Order:** Hendrix called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm.

**1. Introductions / Housekeeping**

- a. UFC members and Associate members introduced themselves.
- b. Attendees introduced themselves

**2. Resident Concerns**

- a. Anne Ryan - Cobble Hill
  - i. Anne presented at last month's meeting. She has an updated version with a couple of errors resolved. Additionally, there was a meeting in Cobble Hill held by the management of the neighborhood yesterday about potential changes in the neighborhood. These changes included the potential loss of 37 parking spots. There is a meeting being held Wednesday, November 19, Anne will forward us the invite.
  - ii. Boukili: If the city removes any trees, the city would have to have a tree hearing. If the city were to sell the property to a developer, then the

developer would have to mitigate the tree removal – by replanting or paying.

**b. Cortney Kirk – Spring Street Resident**

- i. Reached out previously about Rafi Developers making payments for street trees that were removed illegally at Spring Street Apartment 3 years ago. It was brought to the committee, and a sum was assigned to that developer to pay to the City.

- 1. Boukili: They paid a fine, and they have committed to paying for 10 trees per year for 10 years in the spring hill area, and they replanted trees on the site. Have not used funds yet, will be reaching out for resident suggestions on locations, likely this winter.

- ii. Additionally, a private tree removal permit was submitted for 20 Spring Street, and in general the residents are wanting more trees in this neighborhood because there is a concern about a lack of trees.

- 1. Boukili: there is a large white pine very close to the house and it is impacting the foundation of the house.

- 2. Boukili: the permit is under review by Drayton, partial mitigation (10% mitigation) will likely be required, as this application came in after the tree ordinance was updated.

- iii. The residents want to do something at the island at Atherton and Spring Street – there are 3 oaks there that seem to be declining.

- 1. Boukili: Cortney and other residents presented on this a few years ago

**c. Eugenie Hainsworth – Glover Circle**

- i. Has been working with Malik Drayton to select tree species for a tree replacement in their neighborhood – ideally a tree that can tolerate shade and not too tall

- 1. Committee suggestions: Serviceberry, Sweetbay Magnolia, Sassafras, Elderberry, maybe a (red leaf) choke cherry (20-25’).

**3. Champion Tree List and Survey**

- a. Bernard: put together this list, it has been included at tabling events but it has not been formally adopted. Additionally, there would be a survey to accompany it that would allow for people to submit new trees to the list

**Role Call Vote: Motion to approve the Champion Tree List excel spreadsheet and the survey with minor revisions** (motion – Boukili, second – Hendrix)

- i. Yay: Antonino, Jenkins, Boukili, Choly, Warner, Jackson, Hendrix
- ii. Nay: none

iii. Abstain: none

Motion unanimously approved at 5:39 p.m. (7:0:0).

#### **4. Updates from City**

##### **a. City Tree Removals**

- i. Jackson provided the following updates on City Tree Removals:
  1. 22 and 30 Ames Street – Norway Maple and Hedge Maple in poor health
  2. 64 Craigie Street – Norway maple in poor health
  3. 61 Governor Winthrop Road – poor health, not viable
    - a. Has been removed
  4. 95 Lowell Street – Callery Pear in poor health
  5. 20 Lower Campus Road – Norway maple, zero life in the canopy, removing Monday morning
  6. 15 Michigan Ave – Norway maple, 75% dead
  7. 40 Holland – Callery Pear, mostly dead
  8. Tree at 49 Paulina Street, large Norway maple was lost – it failed at the base and landed on the power lines, Eversource helped to clean up, no major injuries
    - a. Bernard: if someone or their property is harmed, what happens?
    - b. Boukili: the person would submit a claim to the legal department; the forestry department may be asked about the condition of the tree to help with the processing the claim

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

- i. Boukili provided an update on recent permits and exceptions.

##### **c. Fall Tree Planting**

- i. Boukili: 23 trees being planted with Mystic River Watershed Association - planting trees along Great River Road, on the Community Path (the old new section in front of Maxwell's Green) – permission granted from the MBTA
- ii. Boukili – an additional 165 being planted with the contractor, approximately 60% native but striving for as much as possible
  1. Contractor will be replacing between 40 and 60 trees with warranty replacements – these do not count towards the goal of 350 per year
- iii. Spring will have another session with volunteers

#### **5. Ongoing Work Updates**

##### **a. Outreach**

- i. Recent events - Groundwork Somerville event and HONK
  1. Hendrix: at the Groundwork Somerville Fall Fest at South Street Farm – more than one person studying forestry and ecology in their careers, lots of folks looking to plant native species in their yards, people are a big fan of the SPAP handout

2. Antonino: HONK had a good showing of folks supporting native species
- ii. SomerStreets
  1. This weekend, Antonino and Warner are joining

**b. UFC Overview and Startup question answering**

- i. Committee answer the following question: **Does the committee have subcommittees/ working groups? If yes, what are they and how do they function?**
  1. Outreach - Engaging the community and undertaking outreach at public events (tabling, etc.). Creating handouts and disseminating information.
  2. Species Selection and Planting Protocols - reviewing and expanding tree species selections and reviving ecosystem functions in the city. More than just trees, also understory and groundcover and all forest layers.
  3. Adopt-A-Tree - manage adopt a tree program; email residents who have adopted trees with information.
  4. Other working groups/ subcommittees are formed ad-hoc as the need arises. Can exist for short term or long-term.

**c. Species Selection and Planting Protocol (SSAPP) - *tabled***

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

- i. What is the purpose of this document? Can we link additional sites such as how to remove them, or provide more information on if some are worse than others?
  1. Boukili: may make sense to highlight at the top which ones are the worst, rather than listing in alphabetical order
    - a. Japanese knotweed, Tree of heaven, Oriental bittersweet, and Black swallowwort
  2. A working group may need to be brought together to revise this sheet – Warner, Bernard, and Boukili interested
    - a. Jennifer Clifford of Earthwise Aware may be a good resource
    - b. <https://www.somervillema.gov/invasive>

**6. Urban Forestry Related Job Postings and RFPs - *tabled***

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

- a. August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 – *tabled*

**8. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm (Motion – Hendrix, second – Boukili)