



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**JACOB D. WILSON**  
**MAYOR**

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Urban Forestry Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, June 18, 2026**

**MINUTES**

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

*Meeting notes prepared by Joelle Renstrom and Vanessa Boukili*

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Suzanne Warner, Tori Antonino, Vanessa Boukili, Marion Davis, Michael Hendrix, Joelle Renstrom

**Associate Members Present:** Allison Bernard

**Committee Members Absent:** David Jackson, Luca Choly, 3 vacant positions, Rob Vanderbeebe (associate member)

**Others in Attendance:** Anne Ryan

**Call to Order:** Hendrix called the meeting to order at 4:38 pm.

**1. Introductions / Housekeeping**

- a. Urban Forestry Committee member introductions
- b. Housekeeping – Boukili proposed changing meeting date in July. Will send poll.

**2. Resident Concerns**

- a. Antonino – wedding nook in Prospect Hill Park has some Carolina/pasture rose. It's an aggressive spreader and may need thinning out.
- b. Bernard – noticed some Japanese Knotweed on the community path was cut.
- c. Davis – shared a link to a planet money podcast about private trees (<https://www.npr.org/2026/06/12/nx-s1-5856509/property-rights-zoning-laws-trees-portland-oregon>). Story about private tree removals. Suggests possible

forthcoming ordinances/legalities in favor of homeowners having the right to cut down their own trees and/or sue if they can't.

- i. We should start thinking about the role of trees on private properties in the ecosystem and how to communicate that. Could be a matter for the education subcommittee.
- ii. Bernard- discussion of right tree-right place. Can we put plaques around certain “champion” trees? Or information about recommended trees? Mystic River Watershed Association guide for selecting native tree:  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WGujWWcRLDaVbWwmwE\\_RX61eB5xz964TBkDUvYx-etk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WGujWWcRLDaVbWwmwE_RX61eB5xz964TBkDUvYx-etk/edit?usp=sharing)

### **3. Foss Park Pollinator Garden Installation (Antonino)**

- a. Grow Native and other local organizations are collaborating to put in a pollinator garden. Saturday (6/20) is a prep/work day and Sunday (6/21) is the planting day. 10-12/1pm both days.
- b. Will need volunteers for watering over the summer.

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

- a. **City Tree Removals**
  - i. Jackson could not be here so cannot share full list. Postpone until next month.
- b. **Private Tree Removal Permit(s) and Exception(s)**
  - i. List is pending updates, but Boukili shared a few of note.
- c. **Spring 2026 Tree Planting (Boukili)**
  - i. Planting season is ongoing, expected to be complete by the end of the month.

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

- a. UFC Recommendations for Mayor Jake Wilson
  - i. Davis, Antonino and Boukili met on 6/17. Continuing to refine the recommendations letter before presenting to committee.
  - ii. Planting annuals vs. perennials
  - iii. Anne Ryan: timing of maintenance for wildlife
  - iv. Privately-owned public space – policy document created by City - review policy at a future meeting? <https://voice.somervillema.gov/pops>
  - v. Future “green score” meeting?
- b. Outreach
  - i. Hendrix: Adopt-a-Tree list email to encourage watering (Boukili and perhaps others to review via email).

- ii. ArtBeat – Saturday July 18<sup>th</sup> – not enough folks available to table.
- iii. UFC Overview and Startup question answering
  - 1. Answered two questions in document:
    - a. “What are the staff roles in the City that interact most frequently with the committee? How are they involved?”
    - b. “Are there other resources related to the committee’s work that members should be aware of?”
  - c. Somerville’s Most Wanted Weeds
    - i. We need one last review before printing on poster board. Boukili to review and discuss at next meeting.

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

- a. Two UFC-related jobs are currently open: Superintendent of Grounds and one Tree Surgeon (to join 2 existing ones). No RFPs at this time appear to be related to the UFC.

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

- a. April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - tabled
- b. May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Vanessa corrected a typo in the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes pertaining to the number of vacancies.

**Roll call vote to approve May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes as amended** (motion – Davis, second – Antonio)

- a. Y: Warner, Hendrix, Davis, Antonino, Boukili, Renstrom
- b. Nay: none
- c. Abstain: none

Motion approved at 6:05 p.m. (6:0:0).

- Antonino provided a brief update on the Blue Columbine from Prospect Hill Park Wedding Nook. Previously concerned that the blue and red were hybridizing on site to make pink flower columbine. PSUF staff shared that the pink flower columbines are a cultivar that was planted, not a hybridization.

**8. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m. (Motion – Davis, second – Boukili)