

Draft LORAX Minutes

July 18, 2016, 6:30 PM, City Council Chambers

Task Force Attendees: Chair/Councillor David Eppley, Councillor Steve Dibble, Rick Rennard, Kirt Rieder, Flora Tonthat, Barbara Warren, Polly Wilbert

Observers: Roberta Clement, Michael Coleman, Andrea French, Danielle Hanrahan, Sandi Power

Absent: Paul L'Heureux, Ron Malioneck, Joanne Mizioch

Next Committee Meeting:

Monday, August 29, 6:30 PM, City Council Chambers

Next Committee Meeting Goals:

1. Finalize Plan for September 29th Kick Off/Publicity Event 4-6 PM at Farmer's Market/Old Town Hall (Subcommittee: Clement, Tonthat, Vago)
2. Understanding present process for tree planning/planting (Councillor Dibble/Ron Malioneck)
3. Recommendation from Sub-Committee (Rennard, Rieder, Warren) on \$25,000 study components
4. Mass in Motion follow up on \$3-5K grant (work by intern, See Click Fix modification)
5. Survey re tree sites / Entrance Corridors, etc.
6. Update on any grant of Gateway Cities monies (from Planning Dept./Ron Malioneck)
7. Possible Report from Danielle Hanrahan on Historic Tree Protections/Preservation, esp. on private property

Discussion and clarification occurred about use of Mass in Motion monies of \$3,000 – 5,000. Request needs to be made to Mayor for use of the money. The present Mass in Motion intern has Rick's original empty tree pit data, which Rick had given to Councillor Eppley. Barbara Warren reported on an email from Mayoral Aide Dominick Pangallo clarifying that the MiM monies needed to be spent by 9-30-16, cannot be used to plant trees but can be used for studies or programs. (Entire email exchange pasted in at bottom of these minutes) Barbara reported on what the MiM monies can be used for.

So for trees, it could be used (with other funds in some cases)

1. A tree consultant to start evaluating all street trees in the city (or updating current evaluation).
2. To bring Rick an assistant through the end of September, or bring him up to full time for a couple months if that would help.
3. To pay youth to work with Rick and learn how to identify basic tree issues and then have them do some basic assessments.
4. A consultant to develop a multi-year budget based on the current spreadsheet Rick has etc.
5. A consultant to match road/sidewalk/utility replacement plan with tree planting plan to give newly planted trees the highest chance of surviving and not be lost the next year due to road work.
6. To develop a media and outreach plan to have residents download the free i-tree app (<https://www.itreetools.org/>) and start to fill in more data on existing trees.

Rick Rennard spoke about the possibility of a student being brought onboard to be tutored re trees and to work with Rick. Rick stated that he does not want to work full time. Barbara noted that interns come and go and that there would be value in public training for data input to the MiM framework.

In discussing a format for tree planting input, Rick mentioned identifying tree locations and knocking on doors to inquire whether adjacent property owners would help care for (watering) a tree, if it were planted. He brought up the possibility of getting a list of people who want a tree planted and then using a lottery to choose where trees would get planted first. Rick would propose a number of tree species that would be appropriate for the planting sites. Rick noted that it can be challenging to find the right tree all the time and that the city tries to accommodate the resident in the choice of a tree.

Rick reported that in advance of the major roadway construction project on Canal Street 10 trees would be dug up and replanted in Forest River Park (cost of \$1,500/each) and that five trees would also be removed from the area on St. Peter Street in front of the Old Salem Jail, where the parking lot is going, and also replanted in Forest River Park.

Danielle Hanrahan suggested that a public program, like a walking tour focused on trees, be organized to get the public excited about trees. She also noted that she would like to see an organized process established for tree replacement.

Councillor Eppley then summarized that the Task Force advocate a mix of identifying current empty tree pits and input from residents to establish where trees would be planted. Councillor Dibble inquired as to what baseline system do we have in place now? What is the process? What is the plan? He advocated that the MiM monies be used to get organized. Flora asked whether we could use another city's process as a model? Barbara suggested using the \$3,000-5,000 to educate people and to identify the open tree pits as a place to start the process.

Councillor Eppley noted that he would like the \$25,000 tree study, for which funding would be applied by Nov. 1st (Tom Devine of the Planning Department would file the grant request), to create a long-term strategic plan for trees, organizing a plan for the next 10-25 years. A long-term, budgetary planning process is needed, not just a limited 3-month exercise. The \$5,000 MiM monies can be used for outreach, education, while we leverage efforts to publicize that Salem wants to plant trees, by filling empty tree pits and responding to requests for trees from city residents.

Councillor Dibble noted that he felt there would be value in hiring an employee so that we gain value for the effort. Rick Rennard noted that hiring an employee meant a potential pay of \$30-35,000/year plus benefits and possible union rules. Councillor Eppley noted that since the city budget has already been passed there isn't any budget for this (although at our June meeting it was noted that the Mayor would be amenable to funding Task Force tree recommendations from free cash).

The group discussed the potential use of Survey Monkey for a citywide tree survey. Councillor Dibble advocated for a modification to the See Click Fix functionality to add "Plant" as there isn't any place on that present system to request the planting of a tree. He suggested that \$1,000 of the possible MiM be used to add the Plant function to the See Click Fix options.

Danielle asked what name we would be using for the effort going forward (LORAX being copyrighted). Later Flora noted some options for a name from her subcommittee's proposal for publicity.

Councillor Eppley asked the Subcommittee of Rennard, Rieder, and Warren to make a proposal for the components of the \$25,000 study at our August meeting.

Rick Rennard suggested that planting begin with the Entrance Corridors and move in to the side streets afterward. Councillor Eppley said that while we can add to the Entrance Corridors, we should also be able to understand what is needed in each city area: Area by area and what works and doesn't work. Each area will have its own special considerations, historic, etc. What are we looking for in each area and how do we ascertain that? Rick noted that siting of trees is ultimately the right tree for the right place, which is always a challenge. Kirt Rieder stated that he felt that the Entrance Corridors would be a good place to begin planting efforts. Councillor Dibble estimated that an intern could assess tree needs on the Entrance Corridors in 40 hours. Rick wanted to make sure that the tree planting option included the 20 feet from the curb allowance so that trees could be planted on private property.

Danielle inquired about a way to protect older, historic trees on private property through a potential tax break on property taxes. Councillor Eppley referred to the scenario in Peabody Center where a 300-year old tree was going to be cut down by a new property owner. He asked whether Danielle would be willing to look into this subject and report back to the group. She wondered whether it would be possible for the city arborist to periodically assess these kinds of historic trees (like a doctor's visit for historic trees). The point was not to create a burden for private property owners, but to incentivize them to care for and appreciate historic trees on their property, which would be a benefit for the city. Sandi Power wondered what other communities have done in this regard.

Councillor Dibble raised the option of a seasonal employee program for ground based pruning to have them trim low hanging branches/suckers. Andrea French noted that the City of Medford has successfully used inmate programs for some of this work.

Flora noted that it would be good for the Task Force to have the Facebook page updated. Councillor Eppley noted that he is the only administrator on that page, but that he would like to have additional administrators volunteer to update the FB page. She then presented the proposal from her subcommittee on kick off publicity. It was agreed that Sept. 29th from 4-6 pm would be the kick off (a date when the Mayor is available and has added this event to her schedule). Follow up includes organization, fundraising, publicity, and the planting of a tree for the event.

Additional discussion took place on subdivision planting of trees and requiring that X number of trees need to be planted per parking space (if not at the site then somewhere else). Rick noted that we do that with National Grid, where if they have removed trees, then trees need to be planted in another location to compensate. Kirt noted that the Planning Board has not focused on a process to compensate for subdivisions where a number of trees are removed and that a like number need to be replanted. Councillor Dibble volunteered during an upcoming meeting with the Shade Tree Dept. to get an understanding of what the present process is.

Sandi Power and Rick Rennard discussed the offset between Mass General Law Chapter 87 and City Tree Ordinances. You can't counter Chapter 87, but you can add to it, you can't restrict or water down what Chapter 87 covers.

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Subject: RE: LORAX tree MiM questions
Date: Mon, 18 Jul 2016 18:16:45 +0000
From: Dominick Pangallo <dpangallo@Salem.com>
To: Barbara Warren <barbara.warren@salemsound.org>

Russ and Dave's intern should be able to work on the data entry, but if it's an overwhelming amount of work we could bring in another person. Just confirming, the MiM budget cycle ends September 30th – funds are supposed to be spent by that date (though they have sometimes allowed for carry-over). The MiM funds cannot be used to purchase trees for planting, but they can be used for studies, programs, etc. Here's a quick summary of ideas from John Pelletier:

So for trees, it could be used (with other funds in some cases) for a tree consultant to start evaluating all street trees in the city (or updating current evaluation). It could be used to bring Rick an assistant through the end of September, or bring him up to full time for a couple months if that would help. It could be used to pay youth to work with Rick and learn how to identify basic tree issues and then have them do some basic assessments. It could be used for a consultant to develop a multi-year budget based on the current spreadsheet Rick has etc. It could be used by a consultant to match road/sidewalk/utility replacement plan with tree planting plan to give newly planted trees the highest chance of surviving and not be lost the next year due to road work. It could be used to develop a media and outreach plan to have residents download the free i-tree app (<https://www.itreetools.org/>) and start filling in more data on existing trees.

I like the app idea as it can help quickly get data collected and also serve as an educational tool or platform to help better spread public information about our trees. Basically, if the committee has an idea to recommend for the use of these funds, we're open to hearing it (as MiM is a program of the Mayor's office, the actually funding approval would have to be signed off through this office). If it's something on-going that overlaps the September 30th date, I believe the funders would be OK with carrying over the amount needed into the new cycle.

Do you want me to reach out to our NGrid contact about their tree inventory from the cable project?

For tree plantings themselves, we have funds allocated in the Public Services budget that can be utilized. The \$25,000 tree master plan indicated in the FY17 Capital Improvement Program is for an Urban and Community Forestry Challenge grant I believe (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/forestry-and-fire-control/urban-and-community-forestry-challenge-grants.html>). As with many of our grants, I expect it will be written through the Planning Department, though the implementation is through Public Services. Once Tom Daniel has started as the new Director of Planning, in early August, it may be worthwhile for a meeting between him, Tom Devine, Rick, Ron, and yourself to discuss the grant application, which is due November 1st (note that the intent to apply form has to be submitted one month before the application itself).

From: Barbara Warren [mailto:barbara.warren@salemsound.org]
Sent: Friday, July 15, 2016 1:13 PM
To: Dominick Pangallo <dpangallo@Salem.com>
Subject: LORAX tree MiM questions

Hi, Dominick, Polly forwarded me your email about MiM intern.

"Hi Polly, I saw the entry about the MiM intern - I have already asked Russ Findley, who does GIS for MiM to do this. We don't require another intern."

It would be good to talk about this on Monday morning before the LORAX meeting that night. Dave Knowlton's intern has already started the GIS map with Rick Rennard's harzard tree spreadsheet. I just heard from Rick that National Grid inventoried 3000 trees in their area of work. If we could get a hold of that information, the MiM intern could work on that using the same coding. So we all need to talk about this.

Secondly, Rick and I were tasked with coming up with ideas for utilizing the \$5,000 in Mass in Motion monies that must be spent by Sept. 1st. Is 9/1 the date or is it later in September? Also, is it possible to purchase trees by this date but they would not be planted until later in the fall. August is not a good time to be planting trees.

The committee wants to do a tree(s) planting this fall to introduce LORAX to the community as an action oriented committee, not just more studies and consultants.

Lastly, are you familiar with the \$25K designated to tree study? If yes, I would like to speak about this too.

Have a good weekend.

~~ Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch Executive Director, MassBays Lower North Shore Regional Coordinator
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