

LORAX Task Force Draft Minutes
Monday, September 26, 2016, 6:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Participants: Task Force Chair: Councillor David Eppley. Councillor Steve Dibble Christopher Burke (Parks and Rec), Ron Malione (DPS), Joanne Mizioch (Cemetery Commission), Rick Rennard (Tree Warden/Arborist), Kirt Rieder (Planning Board), Flora Tonthat (NIAC), Polly Wilbert (SSNA)

Observers: Roberta Clement, Jennifer Firth (Pres., HSI), Co-Chair SSNA Tree Committee: Sandi Power, Frank Silva, and Mary Anne Silva,

Absent: Paul L'Heureux (SPS), Barbara Warren (Salem Sound Coastwatch)

Copies of Minutes to: Mayor Driscoll, Mayoral Aide Dominick Pangallo, Salem City Clerk Cheryl LaPointe

RM: Research on tree budget items. Brought rough figures (spoke w/Councillor Eppley earlier) and Requests for Proposal (RFPs) from five different cities/towns for \$110K-\$300K for a variety of outside contract work (no plantings, rather tree maintenance). As examples of work by an outside contractor to supplement our Shade Tree Dept. work. We are always going to need our Shade Tree staff of two. Passed around the RFPs (**Chairman Eppley will scan these for distribution to the Task Force.**) The scope of work is different in each RFP. If we want to go down this road, we can set up Salem's needs in our own RFP).

KR: Commented on the magnitude of work in an RFP. Would hate to go through the process six times. (RM: Haverhill put a cap on what the bid could be/maintenance and stump removal)

RM: Stats (do not include those from See Click Fix -- SCF), got together with Councillor Dibble last month: Phone call requests: 117 phone calls (tree down/branch on wires, etc.) April to now. Last year 115 take downs, incl. contract work (since July, 72 take downs).

DE: This year's budget, rough amounts: tree-related activity/costs: Tree Warden: \$12,000/year 40hrs/month, full time would be: \$60,000 w/o benefits (est. at 1/5 of full amt.) tree staff: \$103k, (2 to 4 would be \$206K for a year) No overtime in 2015. 2016-17 \$25K of overtime budgeted. Leave it the same. Tree planting presently: \$5K/year, woefully deficient. \$100,000/year start to put dent in deficit of trees. Contracting service, money set aside for removals and stump removals: \$7K Contracted services: \$261K

RR: In 1995 we spent \$125K a year for spraying and removals. Bought a tree truck and trained a couple of staff to do tree work.

DE: What's been budgeted total: \$145,000 including everything but contracting services. Proposed: \$392,000 (\$250,000 increase). We can propose whatever we want to propose to City Council, an amount that is a lot healthier

CB: Commented on phone calls from residents and the need for transparency of people requesting work on their trees.

RM: Cemetery/Shade Tree takes the calls, but those are not in the See Click Fix statistics.

CB: Are you maintaining a list? How far back does that go?

RM: List is approx. a year and a half. We take care of the safety calls first, then work down the list of pruning.

CB: Take note of how long the maintenance list is and how long it takes to get the work done. We should note the backlog as a legitimate issue of needed work.

RM: Calls come in that may push/shift the work list because of the immediacy of needed work.

SD: Thought that Ron was going to share the list of work outstanding with the Task Force.

RM: I thought that I was just going to give the Task Force numbers.

SD: Actual lists would be good to see to understand how it works. So the Task Force can understand the kinds of requests/immediacy of work requested.

DE: The Dept.'s job is to know the priorities. The Task Force doesn't need to have the list.

KR: The list helps us understand the realities of the work outstanding.

DE: Let's cover Flora's questions for Ron for the visibility event on Thurs., 9/29 (because Ron has to leave shortly).

RM: Will have staff for the tree planting, with loam. Will mulch and put the water bags on the trees and stake them, if needed. 2 ½-3-inch caliper trees. Pillar oak (columnar habit tree).

SP: October is a wonderful time to plant trees.

RM: 25 trees will be planted this fall to fill last fall's requests. Will get those done on the list.

Questions about park plantings/bike path plantings (No plantings planned there.)

KR: We have the new trees already. Limbing them up before planting.

DE: PEM paid \$8K to the City for trees for the loss of the Japanese garden trees.

RR: Looked at the PEM trees to be removed and appraised trees and then put a price on them.

KR: 10 ginkos to be replaced in the 7-inch caliper range.

RR: 8 trees taken down. City benefits if we use the trunk measurement method \$14K for 7-inch trees. Square inch method would have been \$4200.

KR: The PEM monies should be the start of a tree fund with those monies. That money should not go into general fund. Replacement trees will go into Essex Street Mall (10) and some (6) on Charter.

PW: The PEM is willing to donate the Japanese garden plant materials for use by the City.

RR: Did not want to deal with utilities underground and the replanting of the PEM trees from the Japanese garden.

DE: Before next meeting, discuss budget numbers and make a proposal to LORAX for a proposal to City Council.

RM: 140 trees/stumps ground down this year (probably have less than a hundred remaining to be done since last November)

DE: How many trees still need to be taken down?

RM: Still have 200 trees that need to be taken down. Tree removal and stump grinding monies – don't have the funds to grind but stumps could be ground down right away.

SP: The trees that are already marked, does that mean that they need to be removed right away or just to be taken down at some time?

RR: Orange dot means it's a hazard and could propose a real problem.

SP: There are trees that still need to come down that aren't marked and trees that aren't dead, but have limbs that need to be removed.

RR: Everything that needs to be pruned. Work with RM to work on the list. You could go up and down every street to prune.

SP: Lafayette Street has many trees that need to be pruned.

RR: Every ward needs to have tree trimming done.

SP: Does every town have a tree warden and two staff and everything else is DPW and contractors?

RR: A lot of towns don't have an arborist as a tree warden. They use the arborist from contracted services.

DE: Move back to agenda. Continue budgeting to next meeting.

Item No. 2: Kirt, funding for the study (no further communication on the study)

PW: Cost of donated tree. \$1K per RM and probably about \$50 for tag and attachment to tree.

CB: Memorial tree program. Park and Rec. donation program and marking the benches. Expressed concern about one plaque after another on benches. Suggests that the plaque on a donated tree be time

limited. Keep a book or brochure that aggregates donations so that there is a tree list of donations. Locations of trees, plant tree within a month/location has to fit in with our overall plan for trees. Common, Willows, parks, have a plan for park trees.

DE: How do we plan the park tree plan?

CB: Landscape architect or arborist. Forest River Park, sections of trees. If we plan to change the way the park looks is one thing, but we should have an understanding of the park plan. Majestic trees on the Common, those kinds of things.

KR: Agrees with CB. Each park has its own character.

SD: Doesn't see having memorials with plaques. Donated trees should be species appropriate and accomplished during best planting times (spring/fall).

DE: Should not have to wait a long time for a donated tree to be planted.

RR: Use Arnold Arboretum type tags with screws with springs. The Common is an historical training ground with majestic trees.

DE: City of Salem might want to set up a Tree Commission. Input of overall community into the tree plan, so, for example, the Common Neighborhood Association could attend the tree board meetings.

DE: Thinking of Cambridge/Somerville planning forethought.

PW: Would suggest that this falls into planning board's area of expertise rather than setting up another city board.

KR: Park board would be better for oversight.

FT: If a developer has a project on a corner of the block is there tree lawn planning in conjunction with the development?

KR: The tree lawn gets commented on as part of any Planning Board site review.

SD: In the past, the lion's share of tree planning went through the Planning Dept. Didn't have to outsource that expertise. Planning Dept. handled all tree plantings in conjunction with Park and Rec. Planning Dept. did citywide tree plan, chose species, location, and hired contractor.

CB: Suggested that we could identify 25 tree donation locations, then Parks plant one at a time. Parks doesn't need to be too complicated, could be fairly simple.

RR: Arborist needed according to MGL, no power over parks if there is a park commission. As an arborist I didn't want that authority. If Parks wanted his help, they would call him. Took down 40 trees at Forest River Park. Then made transplants from Canal Street project. From here on, be cognizant of tree plans in parks, before any more transplants because there is a plan for the parks.

RR: Tree survey for parks, liability from trees that needed to come down. Because a kid in Chelsea was hurt by a tree, focused attention on limiting city liability. Mary Jane Lee Park is Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies eligible. Looked at park plan for MJL park. We're preserving an elm tree in that park.

DE: Mass in Motion grant used for identifying entrance corridor tree pits. Whether there is a stump and identifying healthy trees. Coming up with a private donation leg of this stool, public/private effort. Meeting or exceeding replacement of the number of trees that were taken down. 212 taken down/year, 80 trees planted, 140 tree deficit. Donation part is important. When are we going to inaugurate the donation program?

CB: Ron could identify locations for donated trees. Parks come up with locations for parks.

PW: Recommend that the location options for tree donations be left open; we have a big problem in terms of needed trees across the city. Narrowing location options could constrain the desire to donate a tree.

DE: Cut down a tree/pay for two. Parks could benefit from donations.

SD: General funds should line streets with trees.

KR: With X number of months of tree care included for new trees.

SD: \$1K is too much to charge for a donated tree.

KR: Let's table that discussion.

DE: Getting ready for Thursday. Roberta spoke with SATV about taping the event.

FT: After the tree planting, we will use the performers' tent at the Farmer's Market so we don't lose everyone going into Old Town Hall.. Only about an hour because we only have the performers' tent until 5 PM. Someone will speak from Salem Sound Coastwatch. Historian Jim McAllister will also speak for 5-10 minutes.

SD: Historic Salem 25 years ago agreed to fundraise for 20-25 trees. Raised \$20-25K back then. Their event was hugely successful.

JF: Tim Jenkins might remember that fundraising effort. (Jennifer Firth/HSI would like to fundraise again for trees.)

FT: In some places new developments are required to set aside funds for public art, could we do that with trees?

KR: New developments are already required to provide trees.

DE: New hotel on Essex Mall, they can't plant trees with their development, but should be planting trees somewhere else to contribute to Salem's treescape..

KR: Context, private sector. In Cambridge, the city requires trees be planted under the Cambridge tree ordinance.

RR: PEM will plant along Essex and Charter Streets, putting back more trees than they are taking out.

SD: Should we look at a similar ordinance?

KR: How do we request a tree?

RR: Call Ron and request a tree. You should get a replacement tree in the next planting season.

SD: With a chronological waiting list.

RR: Write a letter to request a tree.

DE: Talk to ward councillor, good second step.

SP: Email? Yes, send an email and cc: ward councillor.

SD: See Click Fix needs to streamline the process. We should have See Click Fix set up so that you can clearly state what tree work/need is. That still needs to be fixed.

CB : Visualize the tree canopy that you want. Street by street.

RR: Politics of planting large numbers of trees in one ward. Will create pressure for like plantings in other wards.

DE: Plan for Boston Street corridor, treescape should be planned. So that there is a plan, known amount for what trees will be planted.

Next Task Force meeting: Monday, October 24th, 6:30 PM, City Council Chambers

Agenda: Will continue on budget discussion.