

LORAX Minutes (Draft)
Monday, January 30, 2017
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Attendance: Councillor David Eppley, Sean McCrea, Asst Dir., DPS; Joanne Mizioch, Rick Rennard, Kirt Rieder, Flora Tonthat, Barbara Warren, Polly Wilbert

Observers: Tom Devine/Planning Department, Jessica Murdock, Judith Murdock, Sandi Power, Dave Rowand/SAFE, Frank Silva, Mary Anne Silva

Attendee introductions were made.

DE: Described informal and formal structure of LORAX Task Force

SMcCrea: New Assistant Director of Department of Public Services. Provided a summary of his background. (Salem resident, Peabody native, most recent experience as union rep/AFSCME overseeing 54 contracts, 10 years as City of Peabody arborist/2005-2015, private tree service experience, NSCC and Univ. of Iowa graduate.) Expressed admiration for LORAX effort. Wearing multiple hats now, same departmental structures as previously. still superintendent of cemeteries.

DE: Understanding and appropriate municipal budget for trees and DPS personnel is needed. Has had initial conversations with Dave Knowlton (interim DPS director). What personnel can we dedicate to trees and what makes sense to dedicate to trees?

SM: Currently, 2 full-time tree personnel (1 foreman, 1 tree climber). In the past used cemetery personnel as supplement, issues with bargaining unit for work by staff in cross usage as tree climber. Working on an agreement to allow flexibility to work in trees/issues about whether the staff person is qualified. No license required/no special equipment required or equipment licensing. Issue of hiring a third person with a CDL license. Issue of bucket truck and chipper interface. Need for separate chipper and bucket trucks. Believes that 2-man crew limitations and truck usage flexibility are issues to be considered.

RR: Contracted private services are beneficial because they provide flexibility.

BW: Clarification of staffing?

SMcC: Clarified staffing out of DPS and Cemetery. Ground man from cemetery staff. 5 people are staffed in cemeteries. Doesn't want to staff from cemetery for skilled tree work. Feels that associated "ground" tree work can be done competently as a matter of course by cemetery staff. Discussion of safety issues/training with chipper equipment.

General discussion took place about safety issues with tree work and skill needs of tree crews.

DE: Asked about benefit of stump grinder equipment being purchased and addition of one person to tree crew.

SMcC: Cost of renting stump grinder or contractual cost of stump grinder: Cost of purchase: \$20,000 self propelled (6-10 years equipt. life) carbide teeth on the grinder. Replacement teeth cost \$5+/each, have high breakage rate. High maintenance needs for equipt. 2 people needed for stump grinder, front end loader.

DE: Inquired about comparison of costs for outsource vs city staff accomplished?

RR: Quicker to contract out.

SMcC: Peabody had its own grinder (2-man operation w/o front end loader. Use shovels with dump truck (cemetery) and grinder.

DE: Need to get through hump using cemetery staff.

BW: Committee input re resources. See budget comparison using in house staff vs contractor. Committee light on expertise on how to assess/look into process.

SMcC: Stump grinder costs for budgeting in house vs contractor.

General discussion on staffing costs, stump grinder, shifting of labor between divisions, union rule collective bargaining / contract issues.

RR: Duties as assigned is helpful/protective in job descriptions.

KR: Management by Sean, but how can we make positive changes with trees?

SMcC: Prioritize stump removals. Clarification of stump being removed below grade (grinder), not complete stump removal for tree planting.

SP: Stumps removed where a tree was requested. Prioritize tree replacements and stump removals

DE: Budget process. Meet again in a couple of weeks on the budget process, which is ongoing now. Finance needs preliminary numbers by end of February for input into budget for 2017/2018.

General discussion of budgeting amounts and goals. How to budget to accomplish goals. Rick Rennard talked about prioritization of tree removals and replantings. Emphasis on entrance corridors. RFPs that Ron had shared with us for informational purposes need to be made available.

Task force to meet again: **Monday, February 13, 6:30 PM re budgets only.**

Discussion of tree donation program, cost of donated tree (per Ron Mailonek): \$1,000. Cost of tree (2-3 in caliper): \$300, \$500 to plant/contractor as part of group plant, \$200 into account for maintenance. Sean to look again at cost of a tree for a donation.

DE: Noted that LORAX is a city council task force. All task force emails are subject to FOIA requests. Use the list for information sharing, but not for non-tree advocacy.

Tom Devine: Here to listen about Lafayette Park.

DE for Councillor Dibble: Read notes from SD: SSNA re meeting with landscape designer to save trees. Re Park and Rec meeting and new trees.

General discussion of Lafayette Park trees and design issues. Discussion of landscape designer mission and outcomes.

The issue of Domino's parking lot paving was raised vis a vis needed width of new bike path and tree planting in conjunction with Canal Street project.

KR: Opportunity to plant new trees along bike path. Advocate putting trees back. New trees between Domino's and railroad? SD's statement about bike path was read requesting LORAX advocacy/support. Suggest LORAX receive an update from the city on landscaping of bike path. Fundraiser for trees along the path. Bike path needs to be reviewed by Conservation Commission (mitigation from Domino's paving may be possible during review).

DE: Issue of anyone not wanting a tree in front of a house.

RR: Not worth planting a tree if it won't be cared for.

FT: Question about water/water fountains in parks. Question about repair of water sources. Addition of spigots. Maintenance of spigots and water bubblers. Damage to water system in Northey St. park. (RR shared recollection of how damage occurred.).

BW: Salem Sound Coastwatch will send Mass in Motion tree inventory. Pdf is on website. Wants feedback. Shared flyer on tree benefits and care recommendations from SSC collaboration.

SP: Expressed concern about narrow tree lawns and accomplishing donations of trees.

PW/KR: Proposed/discussed review of city ordinances and how trees are/should be treated during development applications before Planning Board.

Discussion about replacement of lost trees. Possible that LORAX follow loss of trees and replacements.

DE Possibility of establishment of a tree commission tracking trees and to put teeth into tree requirements.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: Monday, February 13, 6:30 PM, City Council Chambers; Tree budget issues.