

**LORAX Task Force  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 27, 2017**

**Present**

**Members:** Chair: Councillor David Eppley, Councillor Steve Dibble, Chris Burke, Sean McCrea, Joan Mizioch, Rick Rennard, Kirt Rieder, Barbara Warren, Polly Wilbert

**Observers:** Danielle Hanrahan, Tim Jenkins, Mark O'Donald, Jen Meger, Brendan Murphy, Mackenzie Murphy, Mark O'Donald, Sandi Power, Dave Rowand

**Absent:**

Flora Tonthat, Paul L'Heureux

**Next Meeting: Monday, April 24, 2017, 6:30 PM City Council Chambers**

**Introductions of all attendees**

**Tree Donation Program Tree Cost:** Sean McCrea indicated that the wholesale tree cost would be \$400/tree and that he would justify \$600 for a contracted half day (\$100 for planting each tree donated then plant 6 at a time) includes loam and mulch prep of holes, using as little heavy equipment as possible. Tree donation amount: \$600/each.

**DE:** Would this price point be in place for 3-5 years?

**SD:** Plant 100 trees/fall and spring. HSI fundraiser offered. Recommends getting pricing from bigger nurseries with access to larger trees.

**RR:** See if Northeast can match prices of bigger nurseries. Believes that we should be projecting a larger cost for contracted planting of trees.

**BW:** Should we be considering a bigger planting once a year or every other year?

**SD:** Traditionally, the city has done seasonal plantings of larger numbers of trees.

**DE:** Noted examples like PEM trees being planted (due to loss of trees from construction). Donated trees by individuals at \$X amount.

**RR:** In regard to locations for new trees, Sean to determine sites, maybe three or four tree types that can be chosen from.

**DE:** Approved tree, appropriate location, clearance from neighbors in general vicinity.

**KR:** Scale expectations, personal money you will want to see your tree. Expectations come with donations.

**RR:** Include the 20 feet back from curb as potential location for any new tree to expand viability/benefit.

**Brendan Murphy:** Scaled cost of donation, more for a different tree. (DE: For Round Two that might work, but Round One it would make it more difficult.

**BW:** Memorial donation. Might want it to be in a park, which needs to be approved by Park and Rec Commission. Ask Park and Rec to pre-identify places for trees in parks (and any specific types required).

**DH:** Will we offer a plaque or tag for donated trees?

**KR:** We covered tags a number of months ago.

**DE:** Would like to create a sub-committee for donation program. Make a proposal at next month's meeting.

**SP:** A couple of hundred dollars extra to go into the tree program.

**DE:** \$700 donation amount to include a premium of \$100 to put into account for ongoing tree maintenance.

**SP:** Reported on discussion with Ron Malione re cost of trees for Lafayette St. (\$300-400/each)

**DE:** Approval of tree donation program. Then who runs it?

**BW:** We should have a written document to approve.

**DE:** Create a subcommittee to create a document for approval.

**KR:** Working draft before next meeting. A working document.

**Tree Donation Sub-Committee:** SMcC, SD, and Chris Burke (Meet and circulate a draft in a couple of weeks). PW to send draft brochure to those three (Note: this was done by email after March meeting).

**SD:** Revolving fund for tree planting.

**KR:** Enforcement of payment needed if damage to or inadvertent removal of any city trees.

**DE:** Dovetail to ordinances.

**Reference Ordinances:** Original draft ordinance offered by RR, ordinances from Cambridge, Somerville, Houston. SD: Newton, Brookline ordinances added?

**SD:** Developer removal/formula for tree replacement. We need a tree ordinance.

**SP:** How would Salem tree ordinance mesh with Mass General Laws?

**RR:** Salem ordinance would be specific to Salem. MGL are often outdated. Use MGL Chapter 87 as a starting point.

**DE:** Noted previous input by KR about interest in tree requirements when the city interfaces with a large developer. Tree requirement per square footage.

**SP:** Wider tree lawn requirement?

**KR:** Presently no city enforcement capability for tree replacement. Planning Board can recommend trees, but they cannot be required if applicant says that they cannot plant them.

**DE:** Places without spaces for trees should be required to contribute trees for general good that would be planted in other city areas.

**KR:** Developers should be required to contribute as part of the community.

**DH:** If siting building close to road, should leave room for trees.

**KR:** Would be helpful to have it articulated to help with enforcement.

**DH:** Suggested contacting Mark Walsh, forestry dept. in Newton.

**SD:** Danielle could you reach out to Newton to get their recommendation? What changes have they made?

**DE:** Green corridor. (An entrance corridor designation) Boston St. as an example. What opportunities are there to make that a more green-oriented landscape? Lafayette or Loring, as other examples. Another overlay that we could look at.

**Mark O'Donald:** So many rules and regulations that govern planning, flood zones, building materials. One of biggest things are trees re lessening of energy capacity needs. Increases in energy are used to combat tree loss (loss of shade/increases in temperature). This is the effect on the environment. Impact on the running of the city. Funds from other departments? Trees are an integral part of our living environment and as important as a drain.

**Brendan:** Tree credit program. Tax credit. Some negotiation with National Grid for energy credit.

**Mark:** Commented on the new hotel with a rubber roof, heat absorption, building using so much energy. Senior center design, trees around it.

**DE:** Quantifying the value of trees. Monies being made available because of integral part of the environment. Lowers pollution, filters stormwater, filters air.

**KR:** Cambridge ordinance (bullet form/provide sentences to work from).

**SD:** Does KR recommend working from Cambridge tree ordinance?

**KR:** If can't plant trees at development site, then Cambridge or the developer do it somewhere else. Ordinance should specifically state where the money goes and tie the trees clearly to the funds.

**SP:** Tree board/commission needs a place in the ordinances.

**DE:** What would the commission's job be?

**PW:** Historic tree protections should be considered when looking at ordinances.

**DE:** Age of tree, historically significant, species. Endangered species.

**KR:** Private property issue.

**DH:** Tax abatement as a carrot. Some huge trees in Salem that are quite old.

**Brendan:** Designating certain trees a landmark.

**DE:** Concern about impeding economic development.

**Creation of a Tree Ordinance Sub-Committee:** **BW** interested in the work but busy and away in April. **KR**/will work with Cambridge Newton Somerville ordinances **SD RR**

**New Business:**

**SD:** Taking trees down: Canal Street, Lafayette Square, Essex St. LORAX Task Force should speak up to protect trees.

**BW:** Structural problems under Essex St.

**DE:** Essex St. trees (6-8 inch locusts) **SD** a dozen trees **DE:** 96 total caliper inches. City commitment to replace 96 inches of trees to be net zero.

**RR:** Benefit of larger trees, oxygen, shade/cooling, in that area replacement.

**BW:** Upset if had a business there and protecting trees were taken down.

**RR:** Not getting enough calls from departments for consultation on trees (like Dave Knowlton). **SD** called **RR** about Essex St. after the Essex St. plan was done. Needs to talk to Mayor to shine light on a better process.

**DE:** There needs to be a protocol that trees can't be taken down without prior approval.

**RR:** Chapter 87 requires such a protocol.

**BW:** Project checklist for department notification in terms of responsibilities,

**RR:** Public shade tree can't come down without a public hearing.

**SD:** Tough to get a street tree to grow. If they're established shouldn't be cut down, like in front of car wash property on Canal Street. Specific trees for that site. Now they are gone. Some were saved by being moved to Forest River Park. LORAX needs to be more vocal to save trees.

**SP:** 10 mature trees lost at Lafayette Park.



**DE:** Subcommittee needs to address a tree loss protocol.

**Old Business:**

**DE:** Dave Rowand/SAFE program on SATV (DE as chair of LORAX) with Nathan Philips re natural gas in Salem. Take away: Gas detector should be used to check where tree will be planted. So identify a “clean” area where a new street tree is going to be planted. Leaking gas is detrimental to tree. Access to such a detector to have Sean check tree area. Sierra Club has it to lend out. Under a thousand dollars to buy a detection device and training needed on how to use it.

**SD:** Gas leaks are killing street trees and neighbors are complaining.

**DE:** City and towns taking gas utilities to court about leaks.

**Mark:** Issue of awareness. Changes are needed... should be common knowledge so removing large trees should be understood to be detrimental. Maintaining large trees is just as important as the water supply.

**DE:** If tree has been poisoned by gas and the tree is to filter water and air, then public has been harmed.

**Brendan:** Landmark tree/dollar value. Gas kills such a tree/value already determined.

**SD:** Formula of value of a tree (RR). Each species is different, condition, location, it's a little complicated. Responsibility of tree warden. Rather than a complex series of equations that lawyers can dispute.

**RR:** We do not use square root method of valuation. We use the caliper inch / replacement method. One tree on Lafayette, \$45,00050,000.

**SD:** Car destroys a tree in an accident. Then city can get replacement money through insurance claim.

**Attachment: Meeting Agenda**

**List of Reference Tree Ordinances:**

**Cambridge, MA  
Houston, TX  
Newton, MA  
Somerville, MA**

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