

**Tree Planting Committee Meeting & Tree Removal Hearing**  
**Tuesday, April 5, 2016 5:00PM**  
**Brookline Town Hall, Room 408**

**Committee Members Present:** Hugh Mattison (Chair), Nadine Gerdts, Elizabeth Erdman

**Committee Members Absent:** n/a

**Staff Present:** Tom Brady, Brittany Bonney

**Guests Present:** n/a

**AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES**

*H. Mattison moved to approve the minutes with minor modifications. N. Gerdts seconded. All in favor.*

\*The Kilsyth Road neighborhood meeting (mentioned in the minutes from 1/19/16) which was scheduled for April 13th has been postponed. A new date and time will be provided to the Committee and abutters will be notified.

**PUBLIC HEARING: DISCUSSION OF ARTICLE 11 TREE PROTECTION BY-LAW**

Richard Murphy identified himself as the petitioner for the warrant article. He presented his article to the Committee and explained his reasoning for it. He explained how the vast majority of trees in Brookline are on private property, and with density increasing as development continues, the Town is losing many trees because there is no protection on private trees. He described that if passed, this article would; protect certain public and private trees in Town, tree removal associated with development would be protected, defer the cost of tree removal, and create a tree planting and replacement program.

H. Mattison said he recalls the same article from several years ago. R. Murphy said he has made some alterations to the previous article. H. Mattison asked what the distinction between public and private trees is in this article. R. Murphy explained that the removal of trees would be under the discretion of the Tree Warden and Director of Parks & Open Space. When removed, either a contribution to the tree planting program fund or replacement on a per caliper basis must be done. The Committee discussed other tree protection by-laws in Massachusetts.

N. Gerdts said the intent of this petition is strong and admirable. She said the Committee has talked about creating a heritage tree program in the past. She said it is interesting to know more about what other towns are doing and believes administering this by-law in Brookline would be difficult.

T. Brady said that after the original by-law went to Town Meeting in 2001, a Moderator's Committee was formed and they submitted a report in 2003. The only difference between that report and this by-law is a sentence in the paragraph under enforcement and penalties.

R. Murphy said it is a huge issue that currently a developer will come in and clear cut a site before they even have building plans. He wants to see the removal of trees be part of that permitting process.

T. Brady said in 2003, they estimated that a ¾ full time employee would be needed in order to administer the by-law. More recently, they redid the math and found that it would take 2100 hours, which is actually a little more than 1 full time employee. T. Brady said they currently have a good system with interdepartmental communication. He said he applauds the idea and thanked the petitioner for bringing it forward but pointed out the problem with actually implementing the by law.

N. Gerdts told the petitioner that he will find opposition unless it is clearer where the problems are exactly, and said we all understand the problem of clear cutting a lot. She also wonders if 8" caliper is the right threshold, in some situations it would make sense but maybe the trees you want to be protecting are 10". H. Mattison suggested showing some examples of lots that have been clear cut and said it is hard to visualize. He suggested showing a picture of a lot and then again with all 8" trees to see the difference.

N. Gerdts said an overarching protection of trees such as a zoning buffer is missing; the by-law needs to include more about the public benefit in a more quantified way.

Janice Kahn said that the Town should specify within our current design review guidelines that protection of trees is something we value. N. Gerdts responded by saying by that time, the trees have already been cut; in order to be proactive we need to think before the building permit is actually filed.

H. Mattison said he believes the zoning by-law is the way to do this, which would have to be passed by Town Meeting. R. Murphy said he would like to see this go to a Moderator's Committee.

E. Erdman told R. Murphy it would be helpful for him to demonstrate to us with pictures how clear cutting would affect a neighborhood so people can visualize the impacts (i.e., pollution, temperature, stormwater, shade).

N. Gerdts said there is a possibility that this warrant turns into a Moderator's Committee which could lead into fall Town Meeting when they address zoning.

N. Gerdts invited R. Murphy to come back to the Tree Planting Committee after presenting to the Advisory Committee, B.O.S., and gathering more research.

## **TREE REMOVAL HEARING**

### **Opposite 62 Stedman Street**

Tony Guigli with the Building Department introduced himself to the Committee and explained his request to remove a 14" Honeylocust located outside of the Devotion School. The purpose of removing this street tree is the planned widening of Stedman Street to accommodate student drop off and improve safety. At the property line, the curb is going to curve in, which will improve the flow of traffic during pick up/drop off. T. Guigli explained how the school's population has increased by about 200 kids, so they are expanding the actual building to accommodate. The Committee looked at the planting plan for the project and discussed the fire truck access which doubles as a play area. T. Guigli said they tried very hard to preserve as many trees as possible, and have been working very closely with T. Brady. The Committee expressed concern about a large Elm on the site being removed to create a turf field.

E. Erdman suggested to T. Guigli that they plant low and dense shrubs along the waiting line/roadway on Stedman Street due to the closeness of that to the playing field. She explained that the shrubs would help trap exhaust from idling cars if they are planted at the level of a tail pipe. N. Gerdts also suggested adding “no idling” signs in that area. E. Erdman said that without shrubs, exhaust from cars would travel right into the area where kids will be playing. T. Guigli thanked E. Erdman for the suggestion and said he would pass it along.

### **290 Beverly Road, 17 Laurel Road, 73 Laurel Road**

T. Brady explained that these three trees are basically palm trees and all that is left of their canopy is some twigs at the top. T. Brady said he would like to replace them with understory trees. N. Gerdts noted that one of the trees (17 Laurel), the wires are at an angle; therefore a taller tree could be planted there.

### **383 Russett Road**

T. Brady said we will work with Eversource to replace the tree at 383 Russett. The resident now agrees it should be removed especially since a large limb has cracked over the road.

### **BACK OF SIDEWALK UPDATE**

- T. Brady said that we have received the agreement for Summit Ave.
- N. Gerdts said that she feels we don’t have a real process especially for recommendations to residents and the Committee agreed. N. Gerdts said having a slideshow presentation and presenting it once per year to home owners to come to a meeting and hear about the program might be helpful. Everyone agreed that would be a great idea. The Committee discussed holding this presentation at the November meeting.

### **SPRING PLANTING UPDATE**

- T. Brady provided the Committee with a list of proposed species per location that he and Peter Jutras created. He noted that the location of Woodland Rd/Laurel can be crossed off the list; they are not going to plant there because there is too much over story.
- The Back of Sidewalk trees carry over from last year.
- T. Brady said that the first two trucks came in and the trees are now in the holding area. There will be roughly 220 street trees in addition to 70 trees for Fisher Hill and site specific trees, for a total of 370.

*H. Mattison moved to adjourn. N. Gerdts seconded. All in favor.*