

Tree Planting Committee
Tuesday, January 14, 2020 5:00 PM
Brookline Town Hall, Room 310

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

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Tom Brady, Katie Weatherseed

Guests Present: See attached list.

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

N. Gerdts called the meeting to order. The Committee reviewed the minutes from their last meeting.

H. Mattison made a motion to approve the minutes from September 17, 2019. L. Erdman seconded. All in favor.

L. Erdman asked about what was found regarding the trees near the Coolidge Corner Theater. T. Brady stated that the trees belonged to the theater and were within the footprint of the new construction.

NEW BUSINESS

N. Gerdts commented that the overall planting plan for Brookline Place looked good. She also stated that the swales appear to be functioning along Pearl Street, but it would be useful to visit during a storm and see how it works. She showed the Committee pictures of two Katsura trees of concern, which appear to have been planted improperly. T. Brady said that the trees were actually grown too deeply and that there is no issue with the planting itself. The nursery has requested that the Town wait and see how the trees do by Summer 2020. If the trees are still not viable at that time, the nursery will replace them. N. Gerdts stated that if the trees do not survive, she would be interested in considering other kinds of trees for the location. She continued that in her opinion, the Katsuras appear incongruous with the existing trees along the street. H. Mattison stated that the Katsuras were chosen because they wanted to have distinctive trees to create an entryway into the plaza. N. Gerdts said she would keep an eye on the trees. T. Brady mentioned that the plan did come before the Commission in 2019 for their review.

DISCUSSION OF TREE PLANTING REQUESTS

T. Brady stated that none of the following tree planting requests are for the Back of Sidewalk program, but rather are all located on the side of the road.

- 208 Fuller Street. There was a discussion of the exact location of the area in question. T. Brady stated that he thinks the site would be amenable to a very large shade tree and suggested a sugar maple. N. Gerdts was in favor of a sugar maple, but mentioned that it would be helpful if the Committee could look at a list of the large shade trees that the Town plants.
- 47 Monmouth Street. T. Brady stated that the Town will remove the existing tree in decline. He added that it might be helpful to include a short description of each proposed

planting location when sending emails to the Committee. T. Brady and N. Gerdts discussed what other trees are located on the street. N. Gerdts suggested a red maple or oak. T. Brady said he would speak with Forestry Supervisor, Peter Jutras, and develop a recommendation in the next few weeks.

- 360 Washington Street. T. Brady stated that a capital improvement project is anticipated to take place on Washington Street and so his team would plant with the full knowledge that it may be impacted by construction within the next 10 years. He continued that some trees can handle construction activities. N. Gerdts suggested waiting until construction ends and then planting. T. Brady replied that it will likely be several years until construction takes place, and he hesitates to leave that area unplanted for so long. He commented that the tree in question would need to be quite hardy as the site in question is subject to a great deal of salt in the winter and is heavily trafficked. H. Mattison suggested a ginkgo. T. Brady said that he can envision the site accommodating 4 trees. H. Mattison suggested a honeylocust, which T. Brady agreed with. T. Brady confirmed that this site would be amenable to either 4 ginkgos or honeylocusts. L. Erdman commented that she would prefer honeylocusts as they create beautiful dappled light which would be nice for that location.

DISCUSSION OF WEBSITE LAYOUT AND CONFIGURATION

T. Brady stated that he and K. Weatherseed did a thorough review of L. Erdman's draft. N. Gerdts suggested updating the appointment dates of the Committee on the homepage. T. Brady stated that the Tree Planting Committee should have its own individual page, which can be accessed through the homepage. The forestry page should be specific to the tree-specific programs that the Parks and Open Space Division offers, and should be easily navigated to access information about private trees and public trees. H. Mattison stated that he likes the language regarding tree removal. N. Gerdts stated that the private tree removal sub-link should not be there. She suggested the language "Tree Protection and Tree Removal".

N. Gerdts suggested that there may be a better name for the Back of Sidewalk Program that is more easily understood by the public. H. Mattison suggested the "Back of Sidewalk Private Property Planting Program". T. Brady stated that we would note the suggestion and come back to it at a later date. L. Erdman discussed her draft of the "Back of Sidewalk Program" webpage. H. Mattison suggested that more images would improve the page. L. Erdman asked for the Committee to review her language and make edits where appropriate.

The Committee reviewed the list of potential Back of Sidewalk trees that residents may choose from. N. Gerdts commented that we may want to encourage residents to choose large shade trees. T. Brady clarified that this list should just serve as a framework. L. Erdman agreed and stated that the first time a list was made, it was incredibly long and overwhelming. T. Brady stated that there are roughly 84 trees that the Division plants and availability is nursery-dependent. He suggested that we list 5-10 trees per category. N. Gerdts added that a great feature of the Back of Sidewalk Program is that you can plant species that are not necessarily suitable as street trees. She added that she is less inclined to make this list concise. The Committee discussed categories

based on space limitations, and determined that the webpage should identify site issues that applicants should consider. L. Erdman stated that the Committee could share examples of trees in Brookline for people to reference. T. Brady suggested tying our list into the UConn plant database so people can learn more about each species. N. Gerdts agreed with this idea. T. Brady added that he thinks a representative list is a good idea, as it leads applicants to work with us to identify what tree would work best. N. Gerdts added that we would need to include language to inform participants that the list is representative, such as “This is a representative list – every site is unique and the Tree Planting Committee and Town arborist will work with you to determine the best tree for your location”. L. Erdman stated that the next step is to look at the list again, identify small, medium and large trees, and revise the list with UConn links. H. Mattison stated that if we narrow the list of trees down, he can organize associated pictures.

L. Erdman showed the Committee a draft webpage entitled “Caring for your street tree”. She added that this is a brief overview. She thought it would be best to keep it simple and succinct. N. Gerdts asked if the text is based on what is listed in our recently developed tree tag. K. Weatherseed responded that it is. N. Gerdts suggested changing the title to “Tree Care in Brookline” so it includes street trees and Back of Sidewalk trees. T. Brady suggested that L. Erdman remove the information regarding mulching. N. Gerdts suggested that we develop a section on not over-mulching trees on a separate webpage.

H. Mattison stated that he sent out a map to the Committee which he would like to send to Town Meeting Members, suggesting that they identify potential locations for plantings. T. Brady stated that Town Meeting Members should submit those requests to BrookOnline or via staff. T. Brady noted that on the last page, the “pine” is actually a hemlock.

STAFF UPDATE

T. Brady shared the final tree tags with the Committee. N. Gerdts inquired whether the tree tags will be put on both trees and doorknobs. T. Brady stated that the crews will do whatever makes the most sense for each site. N. Gerdts stated that she was excited that these tags were completed and ready for spring.

T. Brady stated that the Parks and Open Space Division applied for and received a grant for an Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan. He stated that the Select Board’s Committee on Tree Protection will serve as the Committee for this plan. The total project cost is \$150,000, with approximately \$112,000 in grant funding. The project will span over 2 fiscal years and will include multiple public meetings. He stated that the TPC will be notified of all meetings.

The Committee identified the next meeting date and confirmed that they would discuss spring tree plantings at that meeting. H. Mattison suggested that the Committee organize a neighborhood tree walk.

H. Mattison made a motion to adjourn. N. Gerdts seconded. All in favor.

ADJOURN

Minutes by K. Weatherseed