



CITY OF HARTFORD

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Hon. Luke A. Bronin, Mayor



City of Hartford Tree Advisor Commission **Minutes of Meeting – June 2, 2021**

In attendance : Jack Hale (chair), Charmaine Craig (vice-chair), Chris Hayes (commissioner), Greg Secord (commissioner), Heather Dionne (City Forester)

Guests: James del Visco, Chris Goodwin, Patrick Doyle, Chris Donnelly, Donna Swarr

1. Minutes from April and May meetings were not available.
2. City Forester's report – lacking a written report, Heather Dionne gave an oral report.
 - a. Elizabeth Morin has been doing some young tree pruning and has fertilized, mulched and pruned new trees on Albany Avenue
 - b. Consulting arborist Allen Fenner is being asked to assess trees on the grounds of Bulkeley High School
 - c. Dionne has been deposed regarding the Goodwin Park tree that fell on a child
 - d. Knox has planted about 100 trees in Goodwin Park and is planting more near the Keney Pond House.
 - e. The City's forestry crew has been doing safety pruning in Keney and Goodwin.
 - f. Northern has been doing safety pruning on park perimeters trying to anticipate failures. Contract work was worth \$28,000 in Keney and \$26,000 in Goodwin.
 - g. Savatree is working on a number of trees in the Ancient Burying Ground. The work has been challenging.
 - h. Due to several fires this spring in Keney, Dionne is putting together a tool purchase order and will be arranging some training. She noticed that crew member Mike is a skilled feller. Chris Donnelly asked about causes of fires. Dionne said 2 were clearly human caused. Donnelly was concerned that lighting fires might become a fad. It was suggested that access to hydrants might be improved. There are a lot of pieces to this particular puzzle.
 - i. Commissioner Craig said she was thrilled by new trees in Goodwin Park and at Annie Fisher School
 - j. Dionne was asked to prepare a list of all administrative functions she carries out. She is not sure why that was needed. There is reason to hope that it could lead to some functions being carried out by an administrative support person.
 - k. Dionne reported that Hartford police identified about 40 locations where trees were blocking cameras. The crew is working to clear them.
 - l. Dionne reported that there is tree work going on on Washington Street and Prospect Avenue.
3. A revised letter to be sent to residents having problems with roots in sewer lines was presented. Commissioner Secord moved to accept it as presented. Commissioner Hayes seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The letter will be used by the City Forester in response to complaints.

4. There was discussion of ways to help residents with problem trees. It was suggested that members of Hartford's legislative delegation be contacted. Apparently, tree maintenance is a topic of high interest in the Governor's Council on Climate Change. HB6441 would create a real estate conveyance tax to help with that. All agreed that any assistance program should target people in need. The Gateway Communities Program in Massachusetts target planting 5 trees per acre in low-income communities. Commissioner Secord said that a tree program could be modelled on a Hartford Housing program where repair assistance is based on income. He said that ultimately a program should be aimed at improving neighborhoods.
5. Proposed revisions to the Hartford Zoning Regulations were presented. Commissioner Hayes moved to accept them as presented. Secord seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The proposed changes will be passed along to Aimee Chambers and the Planning and Zoning Commission.
6. There was discussion about returning to in-person meetings. The consensus was to wait until the City Council returns to in-person meetings.
7. Riverfront trees threatened by Eversource. There was communication with Daniel Burns from Eversource. He is putting together a presentation. Chris Donnelly suggested that the tree removal might be required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), in which case Eversource would not have much flexibility.
8. The new adopted City budget includes \$100,000 for tree planting. Thanks to Marilyn Rossetti for proposing this and to the rest of the council for supporting it. This is important not only because it provides additional money, but also because it is dedicated just to planting, which means it can be used immediately, and also because it is general fund money, not CIP funds, it recognizes that tree planting needs to be part of the core budget.
9. Spring tree planting progress – Chris Goodwin from Knox reported that planting in Goodwin Park started several weeks ago with staging near the ball field. 88 trees will be planted by the end of the week. Knox is very focused on watering due to recent hot weather. Knox will be planting 22 trees in Keney Park, 2 trees at Church of the Good Shepherd, and 30 trees at Annie Fisher School based on some grant funding. They have had to remove some trees that died. Commissioner Craig suggested that trees at Bellizzi School and Mary Hooker School need some attention. Goodwin said he would be surveying all trees planted in the past 3 years and placing tracking tags on them. Patrick Doyle said he would be working on linking that work to TreeKeeper. Donna Swarr said that trees in Colt Park need re-mulching.
10. Hale mentioned a recent webinar on urban orchards put on by UMass. He offered to share the presentation with others on the commission email list.
11. There was discussion of cancelling one summer meeting. Decision on that will wait until we see whether there is urgent business to be done.
12. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Hale