



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 6, 2016

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Absent	

Others present: Steve MacEachern - DPW, Stan Koty - DPW, David Shapiro - Law, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 7:00 PM by Alderman Ballantyne and adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Document List:

- Lincoln Park Tree Summary (with 201488)
- Westlaw (with 201583)
- Agriculture & Conservation (with 201583)
- DCR Order (with 201583)

Approval of the May 2, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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199983: That the City Arborist inspect the health of the trees at the locations named within.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200143: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD commission the arborist and tree warden to inspect the trees on Greenville Avenue, from Munroe Street to Boston Street, to determine their vitality and report back to the Ward 3 Alderman.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200185: That the Arborist inspect the health of the trees at the locations described within.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200638: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with the 2016 tree planting/replacement plan for all Wards.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201408: That the Director of SPCD plant a tree at 26 Illinois Avenue.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201421: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the numerous dead trees on lower Broadway and citywide and update this Board on his progress.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201488: That the Director of SPCD confirm that only native trees are being used in the Lincoln Park renovation and advise of the species.

Mr. Rawson distributed a document listing the number of trees and species to be planted at Lincoln Park and questions were raised about why the city is using non-native trees. Alderman McWatters suggested that the Ward 2 Alderman and residents weigh in about the trees before making a decision. Chairman Ballantyne said that there is a strong push to ask the Administration to use ONLY native trees.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201566: That the Administration not cut down any trees prior to meeting with this Board's Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy to discuss the issue.

The committee discussed Ash trees that are in poor condition and offered the following as an update to residents' concerns:

1. Trees will be cut when there is a public safety issue,
2. OSPCD (Mr. Rawson) and the DPW (Mr. MacEachern) will upload a list of the trees scheduled to be cut to the city website,
3. Ash trees that are owned by the state will be handled by DCR, unless the state asks the City of Somerville to handle them,

4. Specific to Willow Avenue - the 6 trees designated as being in poor condition will be cut down this summer and replaced this fall. Another 6 trees will be designated for next year, as the city is attempting to do the cutting/removal/replanting in phases to mitigate the impact of losing trees on the streets.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201567: That the Arborist check the health of the tree at 143 Powerhouse Blvd.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

201582: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD provide to this Board responses to constituent concerns regarding the Emerald Ash Borer prevention program.

Mr. Rawson spoke about “best practices” and said that there are a handful of tools to manage the Emerald Ash Borer, including chemical treatment and proactively removing the trees. Mr. MacEachern stated there are 155 trees with 75% on a tree save program and the arborist will keep an eye on these trees. DCR has 11 trees that were taken off the list, (7 on McGrath Highway and 4 on Alewife View Parkway and Mystic Avenue). He will follow up with DCR regarding their plans for these 11 trees. Originally, there were 19 trees tagged on Willow Avenue, but that number has been reduced to 12. The city will start the process with the trees in the worst health and is planning to remove 6 of worst health trees. Mr. MacEachern talked about the two flyer system, i.e., flyers were place on the trees slated to be removed and flyers were distributed about the hearing. Mr. MacEachern said the arborist is putting together a list of trees, recommending species for various locations according to their growth patterns. The goal is to replant trees in the fall.

Alderman Niedergang read letters from constituents about the tree criteria on the Ash Borer prevention program and suggested the city talk to neighboring communities about what they are doing about the situation before we start cutting trees. One of the letters asked if the proposed program is premature if only 1 case has been found in Boston. Mr. Rawson stated there are five other Massachusetts counties where investigation has been documented. Mr. MacEachern stated that Cambridge is being very aggressive with treating the trees, removing more than 100 Ash trees. Medford does not have as many Ash trees as Somerville’s 900. (Somerville does not count trees on state property.)

There was a discussion about the three year warranty for trees and Alderman McWatters suggested that the policy moving forward should include a plan for managing the trees, since they are an investment for the city. Removal of a tree and disposal of the logs is performed by an outside contractor if the tree is too big for the forester team to handle. If the city removes a tree, it is put into the chipper.

Some residents felt their questions were not answered satisfactorily. They would like a public meeting where there could be some dialog between the city and residents. Chairman Ballantyne

opened the floor for comments from the public and Mr. Rawson will provide answers to the questions posed from the 8 public speakers.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201583: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD explain to this Board how notice and hearing provisions of the Tree Ordinance and state law are being implemented.

Mr. Shapiro discussed Ch. 87 and related state statutes addressing public shade trees. Alderman Davis asked questions regarding the notice requirements and exceptions to the notice requirements under State law and it appeared that the city's notification efforts complied with all city ordinances and state laws.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201584: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD trim the trees around Nathan Tufts Park near Powder House Terrace.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201585: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the dead tree at 50 Hall Avenue.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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