

Somerville, MA 02144

September 27, 2018

Dr. Vanessa Boukili  
Urban Forestry & Landscape Planner  
City of Somerville  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Dr. Boukili:

Arn Franzen passed on the City's announcement about the Urban Forestry Committee to me, and I'm very interested in being considered as a member. I'm a landscape architect at Klopfer Martin Design Group in Boston, and we've been working for the City on Hoyt Sullivan Playground (we met briefly at the opening event). It's been a particular pleasure to work on this project since I'm also a 10-year resident of Somerville with two children growing up here.

My undergraduate background is in Earth Systems, an inter-disciplinary major where I studied biology, geology, and economics with a focus on understanding complex environmental problems. My interest in and transition to landscape architecture was largely driven by the opportunity to create tangible improvements that affect people's day-to-day lives, as well as a deep interest in and passion for plants. During my eight years at KMDG, I've worked on the design of numerous streetscapes, schools and public park projects in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and elsewhere in New England.

In my professional role, I'm responsible for planting design, including species selection and developing planting details, along with overseeing construction to ensure that proper planting practices are used to start the tree off on a healthy trajectory. I'm familiar with the challenges that limit the success of urban plantings and also with some techniques being used to surmount them, such as structural soils and soil cells, using flexible pavements at tree wells, and public outreach to encourage watering.

My approach to street tree planting comes from a functional perspective rather than an ideological one. In my opinion, all species can provide benefits to the urban environment, including beauty, shade, and stormwater absorption. While I'm very interested in native plant communities and aware of the unique ways that they can support wildlife, I also believe that no plants are native to the urban environment with its highly disturbed soils, limited soil volumes, compaction, heat island effect, among other challenges, and that there are many benefits to a diverse tree canopy.

I'm so pleased that the City seems to be committing to improving the urban tree canopy of Somerville. I'm enthusiastic about supporting these efforts and feel that my experience in landscape design along with my background in biology and ecology make me especially qualified to do so. If you have any questions about my background or my interest, please feel free to be in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sharon Komarow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sharon Komarow