

Longmeadow Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday August 05, 2021
Remote Meeting

The Tree Committee meeting was held remotely via Zoom. The meeting opened at 6:00 PM. The following members were present: Dave Marinelli, Steve Steiner, Kathy Kucab, Mark Tolosky, and Patrick Carnahan. Tree Warden position: vacant. Absent: Bari Jarvis. Also present was Longmeadow Resident Betsy Port.

The meeting was opened by following the approved “script” for conducting remote meeting which included a review of Open Meeting Law.

Public comments: Betsy Port spoke during public comments looking for an overview of the status of Longmeadow public street trees and the position of town tree warden. Ms. Port expressed concern that there is no one to address hazardous public street trees. Dave provided an overview of public street trees in Longmeadow, where the town stands regarding filling the position of tree warden and the role of the tree committee.

Tree Warden Report and Old Business: Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary positions were discussed. Dave will serve as Chair and Patrick will serve as Secretary. The position of Vice Chair was not filled at this time.

No further updates regarding the Route 5 to Converse Street/sidewalk revision.

No word on annual windshield survey going through or not. It will likely not be acted on until a new Tree Warden is hired/appointed. Discussion ensued regarding the need for an annual windshield survey to visually gauge the condition of public trees. Dave explained that most towns conduct an annual windshield survey which is a visual inspection of the condition of all public street trees with an eye towards identifying and removing hazardous trees.

Fall tree planting is being planned but might be limited in scope due to lack of a tree warden. Priority would be given to memorial trees that have been paid for and those trees that have been on the request list for some time.

Tree Inventory has not been updated and will go out of date unless action is taken. The inventory was typically handled by the Deputy Tree Warden and the Intern positions, both of which are currently vacant.

New Business: Tree Warden contract/hiring will likely not happen until early 2022. Possibility of using tree warden from another town on part-time basis or possibly using tree service as a contract tree warden.

Select Board participation is being sought for tree committee. Having a Select Board person serve with the Tree Committee would be valuable for long-term tree matters.

The town policy of reimbursement for street trees damaged by vehicle accidents was requested. No word yet from town legal counsel.

Patrick discussed best practices regarding protection of street trees during construction projects and will send tree committee members information on Massachusetts best practices for the protection of street trees during construction projects. The matter came up as a result of recent road construction on Converse Street where heavy equipment was parked near and on tree roots. Trees were not protected. Damage can take time to become apparent, and removal will cost the town money and result in the loss of valuable green infrastructure.

Minutes were read, corrected as needed and unanimously approved

Next meeting date – The Next meeting of the Tree Committee will on September 23 at 6:00 pm.

The purpose of the Tree Committee is to promote a healthy and sustainable community forest by planting and maintaining quality trees and providing education and advocacy to the public on the benefits of trees.