



Town of Concord, Massachusetts
22 Monument Square, Concord, MA 01742

Tree Preservation Subcommittee Minutes 04-15-16

Minutes of the Tree Preservation Subcommittee of April 15, 2016

Pursuant to a notice filed with the Town Clerk, the Tree Preservation Subcommittee met at 7:00 a.m. on April 15, 2016 in the Second Floor Meeting Room, 141 Keyes Road, Concord, MA. ~

Members Present:

Elissa Brown, Chair
 Christa Collins, Vice-Chair
 Tanya Gailus
 Thandi Muno
 Gail Magenau Hire
 Robert Meltzer
 Lydia Lodynsky (non-voting)

The meeting commenced at 7:00 a.m. and was audio-recorded. ~

Ms. Lodynsky volunteered to take minutes.

The April 4th meeting minutes were approved as amended on a motion by Ms. Brown, seconded by Ms. Hire with all voting in favor.

Open Meeting Law Discussion

Ms. Brown clarified points and suggested “in terms of email”: sharing and offerings are acceptable, but editorial comments and deliberations of any kind are prohibited. With respect to physically gathering and meeting, the Town Planner contacted the Town Clerk who verified: when a working group of 3 or more members gather to do research or to collect information in order to make recommendations to the subcommittee, that is not in violation of Open Meeting law. However, if the working group were to gather information and deliberate on it and then decide to bring forward to the subcommittee an item they decided upon, that would be in violation. If three or more people decide to gather with the possibility of deliberating they should notify the Town Planner so that she can post a meeting with the Town Clerk. This must be done at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Gailus asked if the Town Clerk was specifically asked with regards to three people. Ms. Brown said yes. Ms. Gailus then mentioned that the regulation actually applies to even two people, whether by itself or as a majority of three, if they are assigned a task; and that the three people stipulation in the Town Clerk's explanation was probably because the question had specified three. ~

Ms. Brown reiterated that if in doubt, people should proceed with caution.

Concord resident Tree Survey Questions

Ms. Hire presented survey questions submitted from members of the subcommittee. This broad based survey will target Concord residents with the goals of: a) exploring their familiarity with tree related regulations; b) investigate their positions on the benefits of trees; c) search their desire for community involvement; d) identify their level of concern regarding tree clearing.

Formats of survey questions were discussed, including ranking of responses and inclusion of open ended comments.

Ms. Lodynsky inquired whether a question might address specific wildlife concerns, i.e., what to do if nests are discovered in trees targeted for clearing. It was suggested that specifics be held for a later time as intentions for this survey were for it to be short & broad based.

Mr. Meltzer opened discussion on permits, forest management planning and “methods of protection”, and raised questions: should the committee explore methods of preserving trees via forest management plans? Should neighbors be involved in the homeowner's tree removal decision process? Should guidelines be in place for one tree as well as multiple trees? Should the town have influence over an individual's property rights? Do we explore the role of the conservation commission and “holistic” long-term planning? How does one circumvent issues regarding small parcels of land?

Should contributions to a “tree fund” be considered?

Mr. Meltzer clarified the difference between “tree fund” and “tree bank”: a tree fund is the monetary account held at a bank for planting trees vs. a tree bank is a town’s nursery where saplings are stored.

Tree Subcommittee Flyer Content and Graphics

Graphics representing the subcommittee to be used in flyers, banners, announcements, etc., were created and presented by Ms. Collins. Subcommittee majority feedback on the graphic’s included “simple, charming and effective”. The goal was to have something ready by April 28th, in time for West Concord’s Advisory Committee Open House, and April 29th’s Arbor Day ceremony at Concord town’s center. A vote was taken and a quorum was reached approving the poster.

Subcommittee’s Webpage Content

Ms. Hire suggested the Subcommittee consider posting study links and resources on the webpage, and would also like to see a list of similar laws in Massachusetts. Mr. Meltzer stated he had the MA laws list and would bring it to the next meeting. Ms. Brown suggested that working groups pull together comprehensive lists that the Subcommittee could also review at the next meeting.

Draft Press Release

Ms. Gailus requested 1) add “a decrease in noise pollution” to the list of tree benefits; 2) insert the word “also” in the first line of the 5th paragraph: “Given that private property rights must ALSO be respected”; 3) add “and/or” to the last sentence - “please fill out the survey AND/OR send your thoughts”.

The next meeting was scheduled for 7:00 AM, May 2nd.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Lydia Lodynsky