

## ARLINGTON TREE COMMITTEE

11 FEBRUARY 2015

**PRESENT:** Mary Ellen Aronow (Chair), Eliza Burden, Emily Snyder (Minutes), Sally Naish, Susan Stamps, Becky Edmondson (visiting), Larry Englisher (resident with concerns about tree removal), Mike Rademacher (DPW Director)

**ABSENT:** Liz Pilcher

1. Welcome

2. DPR Tree Department Update (Mike)

- a. **Tree Warden** – extended deadline; response ‘not great. There are probably 2 applicants worth talking to (out of 8).

**Next steps:** Interview 2 or 3 or re-advertise.

- b. **Spring Tree Ordering** - Sally sent list to Mike. He is reluctant to order because (a) if Town does employ contractor, that contractor may not accept responsibility for trees purchased and (b) uncertain spring planting suitability considering winter weather (trees which come from VT should be planted last 2 weeks in April). If bid is put out, it could take 4 weeks. How long can trees be held? Town Meeting allocated funding to hire a contractor because DPW’s Tree Dept. is completely backed up with work. Last year, Mike asked contractors if they would honor prices for the fall because there were no trees to plant in the spring; contractor honored prices and did fall planting.

**Next steps:** Call to nursery to ask if they could put trees on hold (Mike). Sally to circulate list and ATC to choose, e.g., 5 species. Mike advised staying with small trees (maybe 25 max. large ones). Total order: 150 trees, e.g., 5-8 groups of 25 of the same species. Mike will continue to review requested tree locations.

- c. **Possible grant.** Eliza circulated a draft intent-to-apply statement (drafted by her and Liz Pilcher) for a DCR grant. Mike suggested that ATC maybe ask for money to buy trees, choose a neighborhood, and then offer free trees to residents. Mike said DPW would be willing to do a simple planting demo and

provide information on tree care. This approach would require the least amount of work by contractors or Town in terms of tree planting.

3. Larry Englisher - resident with concern about 3 large homes built on double lot behind his house: Mr. Englisher was concerned about removal of trees from building site abutting his property. As well, a worker had climbed over his fence to cut down a tree on Mr. Englisher's property. Mr. Englisher called the police to stop the removal of the tree. He asked the ATC what is the procedure for tree removal? It was explained that there is a public hearing when someone wants to remove a 'public' tree. In Mr. Englisher's case, the developer had to present plan to the Building Inspector and should show no trees were to be removed from that area. What is the mechanism? General uncertainty about zoning regulations. Mike explained that 60' frontage and 6,000 sq. ft. = size for house in Arlington. When variance is involved, abutters need to be notified; otherwise, not needed. "As of right" [*do not know what this means*] General issue: little attention paid to trees when building new homes on private property. How to protect? Very hard / impossible to tell people what they can do on their own property. Very hard to police. Some town trees are cut down out of innocence. Hearings only needed for healthy, *public* trees. If deemed OK to remove, DPW removes and property owner must pay for the costs of removal. If not, requestor pays. What can ATC do?

**Proposed Next steps:**

- (a) Do research with Lexington (Susan)
  - (b) Look into previous by-law proposed by ATC, which didn't pass TM (Mary Ellen)
  - (c) Reach out to Zoning Dept. to ask them to educate us. Perhaps something more proscriptive, rather than just what cannot be done.
  - (d) Maybe do historical research on Google Maps.
  - (e) Maybe invite Town Building Inspector to ATC to explain process and discuss these issues
  - (f) Write an *Advocate* article informing people about such things happening.
4. **22 Mill Street tree** – committee update Becky spoke to an arborist in Belmont who's also a member of the Belmont Women's Club to find out how a tree can be designated as a "heritage tree." Since the tree on Mill St. is in a wetland, ATC might be able to apply to DCR for protection funding. Becky also spoke with Clarissa Rowe. Becky will

continue researching. ATC Suggested she contact Richard Duffy, Arlington Historical Society.

**Next steps:** Research how to have tree designated as “heritage tree.” Look for drafting an ordinance. (Becky)

5. EcoFest (Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 2 pm) – Liz and Eliza are available for the ATC table. Some materials are: What kind of tree? Poster showing Tree Cover Visual Assessment – highlighting thin areas. Right tree, right place. Use Recommended Trees for Arlington list.

**Next steps:** Mary Ellen will report back on what materials ATC had for Town Day and use those. Sally to return EcoFest form to Patsy Kraemer.

6. ATC Membership openings – Susan to follow up with Town website and *Advocate*. To publicize openings. ATC is seeking 3-4 members.