

BEDFORD ARBOR RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REMOTE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 6th, 2023 7:30PM

1. 7:38pm - Call to order, required notices, attendance: Bopha Malone, Select Board, David Manugian, DPW, Dan Churella, Jaci Edwards, Deb Edinger Bobbi Tornheim, Elizabeth Knox, Molly Haskell.

2. Tree Policy:

David explains basic requirement for enforcement. It should suffice to call out the Tree Warden as the enforcer, which is the case for both MGL Chapter 87/Public Shade Tree Law and the Bedford Tree Policy.

8:04pm, David Manugian thanked and excused.

3. Discussion and validation of working assumptions for our deliberations-resolved.
4. What is our strategy?
 - o Craft and finalize a fully formed policy which represent our best recommendations for a New Tree Policy
 - o Create presentations to educate the Town, and deliver to Boards and Committees. Take in feedback to hone the presentation. Finish with presentation to Select Board.
 - o Create an education campaign—social media, Bedford Citizen, presentation to community groups, etc.
5. Tree Policy-discussion of open questions-roughly listed from largest to smallest scope
 - a. Mitigation
 - i. Research with other Towns and Cities shows that replanting as an option for private owners fails due to lack of oversight and enforcement. This is also our observation in Bedford. Because of this, these communities have required mitigation in form of payment only. **Agreed:** This will be the only option for private requests to remove Town-owned trees.
 - ii. **Agreed:** The Town will always have the option to replant according to a metric where they replant based on diameter: e.g., for a 15” diameter tree, 5 trees of 3” diameter must be planted.
 - iii. Dan explained that, based on experience of these other communities, this works out best by charging homeowners a dollar value per inch of diameter, with a multiplier as trees become larger. This is in keeping with the logarithmic increase in the performance of trees as they grow.
 - iv. Dan spoke with the Arlington Tree Warden, who advised that figuring \$350/inch

diameter for a tree is considered an industry standard: i.e., the purchase, delivery, and planting of a 3” diameter sugar maple will be about \$1,000.

v. **Agreed:**

The goal here is not to create a process that wrings money from the Town or citizens. Rather, the goal here is to require payment that is commensurate with the actual replacement value of each tree. In turn the monies involved will force petitioners to

1--carefully consider whether or not a Town-owned tree absolutely must come down, and, if so,

2—assume up front that the budget for a project must include funding to either work around the tree, or pay full fees to remove it.

Agreed: we observe that trees are taken down now because working around them incurs a dollar cost. Our goal is to arrive at a dollar value for trees that induces the owner/Town to find it cost effective to keep the tree.

- vi. **Agreed:** mitigation fees will be based on \$350/diameter inch of the removed tree, with a multiplier for every ten inches, per the schedule in the draft.

[Discussion of using monies from Town Tree Fund for “behind the sidewalk” tree planting. This is separate from the Almost Free Tree Program (AFTP). Discussion of efficacy of AFTP, and popularity. Importance of public education. This is tabled—more appropriate to Tree Master Plan.].

- vii. **Agreed:** New Tree Policy must include language that the Town will have the authority to plant trees in the Public Right of Way at will on all streets.

- viii. **Agreed:** add to process matrix: **Public Requests to remove trees on Private Property.** As odd as it seems, this happened in several locations on the North Road sidewalk project. More common than one might expect.

For such a scenario, the Town will have the option to replant on private property, with the proviso that the Town work it out with the homeowner, who must agree to care for the tree, provided space is available.

Regardless, the Town will always have the option to mitigate with planting, or fees paid to the Town Tree Fund, in any combination such that the Town is made whole on the basis of the metric already called out.

Action Items:

- Dan Churella to gather data to back up the assertions of the Arlington Tree Warden.
- Molly Haskell to gather pricing information for 3” trees from nurseries, suppliers. Need to include purchase, delivery, and planting.
- Molly Haskell to find a place to put the “plant at will” proviso.
- **UNASSIGNED** How to work enforcement—this is still open ended. Need someone to work on this issue. Whoever has a draft, should feel free to create one and circulate according to Open Meeting Law.

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- Dan Churella to create clean version of Google drive draft that removes all or most of the visual clutter (comments, questions, edits, etc.) of the DRAFT Tree Policy so that the next level of work can be done. Also, changes discussed at this meeting will be incorporated into the text and posted to the Google Drive. Items for discussion will be called out for the next meeting to resolve.

Discussion of Open Meeting Law constraints—what’s acceptable, what brings us into violation:
recording time mark 1:56

1. Next meeting—March 16th, 730pm, via Zoom, Session solely on the Tree Policy and Appendix.
2. Motion to adjourn at 9:32pm, voted unanimously, and adjourned.