

Hamden Tree Commission

Meeting of Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Parlapiano, Ms. Sternberg, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Nathanson

Others in Attendance: HAT Representative Ms. Hoffman, Consulting Arborist Mr. Harris, Public Works Director Mr. Cesare, Acting Community Development Director Ms. Smith, Commission Clerk Ms. Tobin

Call to Order

Mr. Parlapiano called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Ms. Smith introduced herself as having had many titles with the Town, but right now, she is the acting Community Development Director. She responded to a plea for help with the writing of the grant.

Approval of minutes of regular meeting of February 16, 2021

Mr. Montgomery made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Cummings seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Public comments on agenda items

Ms. Hoffman thanked Public Works Director Cesare for allowing her group to remove vines from trees. Mr. Cesare told Commissioners he would be happy to help write a letter for the grant. He met with Commissioner Montgomery regarding the spring planting, and is happy to have his department plant any tree we can get.

Mr. Parlapiano announced that he would like to discuss the EPOC (Environmental Professionals of Connecticut) grant next. Mr. Montgomery mentioned to Ms. Smith that he spoke to Mr. Sendroff last year regarding planting, but we couldn't plant because of COVID. He has 45 trees on his list including two for the Keefe Center to provide shade. Mr. Sendroff wanted to discuss this with stakeholders. Ms. Smith replied that she has a meeting with the community garden folks next week and she will discuss this with them. Mr. Montgomery has to get the list ready to put out to bid. Ms. Sternberg asked Mr. Montgomery if he has looked at Pride's corner Farm's wholesale list. He had not and Ms. Sternberg will send it to him. Mr. Montgomery told Mr. Cesare that he looked at the tree list and said there is not enough money in the Capital Fund. Mr. Cesare always comes through with \$9,000 plus. Mr. Cesare said everyone seems committed and there is always an appetite for tree planting.

Mr. Parlapiano reviewed the grant material that he sent out earlier today. For the most part, Commissioners had not had a chance to study the documents. Mr. Parlapiano said he needs

help with measurable goals. Twenty saplings won't make much of a difference. Ms. Sternberg had not seen the documents, but she will review them and comment. Mr. Parlapiano attached her 20% tree cover document. She suggested Mr. Parlapiano pick another similar area to compare with Newhallville. A measurable goal could be the Town plants 80-100 trees each year. The grant adds another 10%, bringing trees to a neighborhood with a lack of tree cover. Mr. Montgomery will go into Google Earth. We can talk about the percentage of houses that don't have a street tree. After the 1980 tornado we used a FEMA grant to plant street trees in that neighborhood. There may be other grants for planting on homeowners' property.

Ms. Smith said she tried to get information from the State and finally reached out to the Head of EPOC and went into the history of the area and the remediation and the fact the new trees that are there are very young. He found that information interesting. Measurable goals could be comparison of the value of these new trees being where trees are noticeably lacking. In addition, this is a CDBG targeted neighborhood. Mr. Parlapiano will follow up with Ms. Smith on that. The deadline for the grant submission is March 31, 2021. Mr. Parlapiano said the majority of the work is done if it makes sense to Commissioners, he would ask for approval.

Mr. Parlapiano said per discussion with Council Representative Brad Macdowall, the Legislative Council does not have to approve the application, only the acceptance of the grant funds. This is an easy process.

Ms. Sternberg asked have the people who want trees been identified. Mr. Parlapiano said Kim Washington, a community organizer, is working on a list of people who want trees. There is also a letter from the Civic Association in support of trees and one from Mr. Cesare being distributed. Mr. Cesare had to leave the meeting for a meeting of the Fiscal Stability Committee but said he and Ms. Smith will work on a letter.

Mr. Parlapiano said he found out about this grant through the Peabody Museum. There was discussion on how many streets are in the target area. Mr. Parlapiano replied about 12 blocks. Ms. Nathanson said there are not many street trees, but there are some in back yards. Mr. Harris mentioned that the work is going on at the substation on Whitney Avenue and some trees are being removed by United Illuminating in one area of the neighborhood. New lines and poles are being installed. The substation near the waterfall is being decommissioned and they are rerouting the circuitry. Mr. Montgomery said he will have something by the 21st or 22nd on the tree population.

There was further discussion on neighborhood comparisons. Mr. Parlapiano doesn't feel comfortable trying to come up with socio economic equity and Ms. Sternberg doesn't feel comfortable doing neighborhood comparisons. Some residents don't want trees because of dropping leaves or fruit. Mr. Parlapiano mentioned that when the Commission had a table at National Night Out, there was not much interest in trees. He mentioned that some portion of the grant is for education and we want to try to educate people with signs and by other means. This is for a Fall planting project, so we have time to work on this Mr. Montgomery mentioned

that owners are being asked if they want a tree and can participate in the choosing process. Some are concerned parking, but there will be a lot of buy in. He said one block of 23 houses has no street trees. After the remediation, United Illuminating did some tree planting and in some instances trees were planted by a contractor, but they were poor trees.

Ms. Hoffman commented the Governor's Council on Climate Change is looking at the equity issue. People need to be educated on the benefits of trees. Mr. Harris mentioned the bill giving United Illuminating the right to take down any trees under three phase wires. This was unanimously moved to the floor with a promise by the co-chair that Tree Wardens will maintain control over the three phase wire project. There is concern about people's rights. (Senator Needleman's bill). Mr. Harris spoke with Eric McConnell whose concern was if a tree knocked down a three phase circuit it would cause a major outage.

Old Business

1. Tree Activity Report
 - Public Works: Trees planted/Removed/Pruned/Permits issues
 - UI Vegetation Management Status

Mr. Harris reported Hamden did well during the recent high winds. United Illuminating has a 14.5 mile UPZ in the planning stages for the southwest part of Town. Mr. Harris will have to tell them which trees to removed and which to prune. They are no longer doing TRM (8-10-15 pruning). If there is a limb on the wires they can take that limb off.

Mr. Harris reported that the Town is picking up stumps from the tornado and other storm events. Ms. Sternberg said the stump near her house was removed and the area loamed and seeded. She said it took a good part of a day.

2. Notable Trees

Ms. Nathanson sent Commissioners her press release on this month's notable trees, the white pines at Lake Whitney. Today she received three responses from the Regional Water Authority and will incorporate that information into her write up. Mr. Montgomery referred to the Quaban Reservoir in Massachusetts. Conifers prevent leaves from deciduous trees from getting into the water where they add nutrients and color to the water supply. The RWA no longer plants conifers around their water supplies. Mr. Montgomery will work with Ms. Nathanson to add information on the importance of white pines in colonial times when they were used for building and ship's masts and the use of white pines as timber trees. Ms. Sternberg mentioned the herons that nest in the pines around Lake Whitney.

For April, Mr. Montgomery would like to see a flowering tree. Ms. Nathanson reviewed trees used in previous Aprils. Mr. Parlapiano mentioned the black willow on Wakefield Street. Other trees mentioned were a hemlock, and a weeping cherry on Jessiwig, Mr. Montgomery mentioned a showtime crab apple that is now available. Ms. Nathanson and Mr. Montgomery will continue to work on the April tree.

Tree Planting

Mr. Montgomery mentioned that Mr. Cesare reported \$9,000 in the tree planting account. He and Mr. Siciliano are into the tree planting in mid April. There are 47 tree requests on the list. He would like to get the trees in before Arbor Day. There was discussion on the fact that people can donate to the tree fund. There was mention on protective tree collars for the new trees. Mr. Montgomery said Fairfield has some and he will send pictures of what they use.

4. Education

Mr. Harris said he would be interested in doing something in southern Hamden on education about trees.

5. Commission Liaison Report

Mr. Cummings attended an Energy Use and Climate Change Commission meeting chaired by Larry Rosenthal. Kathleen Schomaker was in attendance and talked about complete streets – how street design is laid out for vehicle and bicycle traffic and also about Electric Vehicles. It was very interesting. There is not much overlap with the Clean & Green and Energy Use and Climate Change Commissions. He will attend a Natural Resources and Open Space Commission meeting next.

6. Other Old Business

There was no additional old business.

New Business

1. Other New Business

When Mr. Parlapiano was talking with Kim Washington regarding tree planting, she mentioned a paraprofessional at Hamden High School who had recently passed and wondered if it was possible to plant a tree in her memory on the High School property. He told her it was possible but he would have to look into it. Ms. Nathanson said when they did one at the Helen Street School, the principal was very interested. Ms. Washington is already in conversation with the principal of the High School. Mr. Montgomery mentioned a courtyard that might accommodate a small tree. Ms. Nathanson there is really not a courtyard any more. Mr. Parlapiano will get back to Ms. Washington.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Parlapiano asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Nathanson so moved. Mr. Cummings seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by _____
Gerry Tobin, Clerk of the Commission