

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
East Providence Tree Commission
Regular Meeting
March 30, 2022

1. Call to Order: Carol Auer called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Roll Call: Present – Council member Anna Sousa; Johanna Walczak (Planning Department), Claire Tierney (Secretary), Jenn Tierney (V. Chair), Joe Gibson, and Carol Auer. Absent - Tony Vieira (Parks Department), Ron Nawacki (Tree Warden).
3. Approval of Minutes: Joe Gibson moved to approve the minutes of 11/22/21 and 1/18/22; seconded by Claire Tierney; approved unanimously.
4. Public Comment: no members of the public were in attendance
5. Old Business:
- A) Site Selection for Tree Planting. The Tree Commission continued discussion of the \$25,000 capital improvements budget for tree planting. Site selection included consideration of the Tree Equity Score (TES). Johanna Walczak presented a map showing TES, city property and other features in the city. Joe Gibson discussed how many trees the budget could buy. Councilmember Sousa talked about the importance of tree maintenance, infrastructure, and funding for equipment. Carol Auer commented that the last budget request from the Tree Commission included more funding for the Parks Department. The commission chose the Orlo Avenue Elementary School as a tree planting site because it has a low TES and very few trees. Another site for consideration is the street near the United Methodist nursing home. The next step will be a site visit by members of the commission, discussion with the Parks Department, and estimates for future watering and maintenance.
6. New Business: A) Native Plant Diversity Ordinance. Carol Auer provided an ordinance from Somerville, MA as an example for EP. She presented a draft ordinance with the stated goal of establishing minimum standards for the use of native plants on city property and to promote plant species diversity in the city. Discussions covered the definition of native plants for EP, considerations for climate change, and the definition of invasive plants. Joe Gibson volunteered to see if the Master Gardeners have sn invasive species lists for the state. Carol Auer will conduct more research and bring a revised ordinance to the next meeting. Jenn Tierney requested a map of existing tree canopy on city properties and Johanna Walczak responded that she can make a map.
7. Liaison Reports. Johanna Walczak reported on a grant application to the DEM to fund ground truthing, data validation, and data analysis of the tree inventory. Plantings on Bullocks Point Avenue are in progress. Johanna offered to help coordinate plantings on private property and she was thinking of doing another round of outreach to residents on that street. Champion Tree maintenance will occur this June around the Weaver Beech and the Champion Tree by the Post Office.
8. Adjournment. The commission chose the date of April 20, 2022 (7pm) for the next meeting. Anna Sousa made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 pm; Claire Tierney seconded; unanimously approved.