



## City of Boston Urban Forestry Division

### Urban Forestry Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2026

6:00-7:30pm

#### **PURPOSE**

The Urban Forestry Advisory Committee is an intentional way to engage residents from diverse neighborhoods and backgrounds. The number one goal of the City's Urban Forest Plan was to put equity first as we work to expand the urban forest canopy. The lived experience and knowledge of committee members will help to shape the plans and actions of the Urban Forestry Division. We want the benefits of our urban trees available and accessible to all residents of the City.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

*Present, in person:*

Urban Forestry Division: Todd Mistor (Director), Kaliopé Marske (admin)

Committee: Patricia Alvarez, Lilian Bonilla-Reyes, Marie Fukuda, Grace Richardson

*Absent:*

Committee: Anthony Brewer, Jaedin Feaster, Shamilia Lloyd, Gideon Neave, David Venter

#### **AGENDA**

1. Urban Forestry Division update
2. Review of response to the Open Meeting Law complaint
  - a. Discuss procedures for the functioning of the group and meetings
3. Ideas for getting people involved in Urban Forestry activities
  - a. This has been suggested at past meetings as a possible direction for the committee
4. Upcoming meeting schedule
5. Member terms expiring
6. Agenda items for next meeting



## Urban Forestry Division update

- The spring street tree planting program is wrapping up
  - Planting 1,100 street trees this spring
  - Spring is a larger tree planting season than fall because of timing and tree availability
- Had a small, separate contract to plant 60 trees in parks:
  - Edna Bynoe park
  - Mary Hannon park
  - Harambee park
  - Horatio Harris park
  - Marcella park
- Non-profit partners also leveraged funds for park tree planting
  - Thank you to Tree Boston and Tree Eastie for all their efforts
- Treating ash trees to protect against EAB will start soon
- Recent storm resulted in over 400 emergency calls
  - Crews responded to all
  - Many were branches from private trees that fell into the public right of way
- Tree Protection Contractor Field Guide
  - Shared collaborative work with Public Works Department to protect trees when construction is nearby
  - Will be linked on the Urban Forestry webpage

## DISCUSSION

### Review of response to the Open Meeting Law complaint

- Reviewed and read sections of the Parks Department legal team response to Open Meeting Law complaint filed on March 12, 2026
  - The Urban Forestry Advisory Committee did not violate the Open Meeting Law because it does not meet all of the factors to be subject to the law.
  - The Advisory Committee's role is merely to advise the Commissioner on decisions that she has the sole authority to make.



- Even groups subject to the Open Meeting Law are not required to allow public comments at their meetings, only that no person shall address the group without permission from the chair.

## **Discuss procedures for the functioning of the group and meetings**

### *On public engagement*

- Looking at other advisory group's examples:
  - Email inbox or webform for the public to submit comments to the group
    - Circulated to all members prior to meeting
  - Allotted time at end of meetings for public comment, set number of minutes.
- Committee members were in favor of an email inbox or webform rather than real-time comment at end of meeting.
- Email inbox or form on the UFAC webpage will be developed in the near future
  - This method for public comment will be a standardized tool for Committee members to direct the public to.

### *On public attendance*

- The above discussion of email inbox or webform would allow public engagement without public attendance.
- Concerned that public attendance can and has been stressful, distracting. Especially when the Committee has yet to establish fundamental goals and procedures.
- Although not required by law, the Committee can publish meeting minutes to keep members of the public informed of meetings without attendance.
- The Urban Forestry Division will explore the possibility of hybrid meetings when/if the committee meets in person.

### *On meeting structure*

- Committee Function and Structure Subcommittee was established
  - will meet before the next meeting to present recommendations for future meeting frameworks and operating procedure.



### *On Committee goals*

- As defined by the Ordinance creating the Committee and reiterated in the Law Department's letter, the purpose of the Committee is to advise the Commissioner of the Parks & Recreation Department on the implementation of the Urban Forest Plan.
  - Discussed experience with other advisory groups and the understanding that not all advice is taken.
- There are multiple ways in which to advise:
  - Research initiatives
    - Heritage Tree Program
    - Tree Protection Ordinance
  - Develop engagement strategies
    - Community outreach
    - Creating a short summary of the UFP in accessible language
    - Adopt a tree program
    - Social media
- Group agreed to select a range of topics to investigate related to the implementation of the Urban Forest Plan that the Commissioner could choose to pursue
  - Noted that some topics of interest from the Urban Forest Plan may be a more difficult lift than others

### **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JULY 15TH**

- Group agreed to have a special out-of-sequence meeting to review the Subcommittee's recommendations on the Committee's structure.
- The meeting will also be for Committee members to brainstorm topics from the Urban Forest Plan for the Committee to pursue
- The meeting will be in person, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

### **MEETING ADJOURNED**