



Medford City Council
Medford, Massachusetts

Committee of the Whole, July 15, 2025

City Council

Isaac B. "Zac" Bears
Anna Callahan
Kit Collins
Emily Lazzaro
Matt Leming
George A. Scarpelli
Justin Tseng

This meeting will take place at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Medford City Hall, 85 George P. Hassett Drive, Medford, MA and via Zoom.

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89923754643>

Call-in Number: +13126266799,,89923754643#

Live: Channel 22 (Comcast), Channel 43 (Verizon), [YouTube](#), and medfordtv.org.

To submit written comments, please email AHurtubise@medford-ma.gov.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

19-070 - Offered by Vice President Collins and Councilor Callahan

Tree Committee Ordinance

PAPERS IN COMMITTEE

To view Papers in Committee, please email ahurtubise@medford-ma.gov.

Adjournment

MEDFORD TREE COMMITTEE ORDINANCE

Chapter 2, Article III of the Medford City Ordinances is hereby amended as follows to insert a new Division 17, creating the Medford Tree Committee:

1. **Purpose:** The Medford Tree Committee will promote a diverse, healthy and sustainable urban forest that will provide for the health, general welfare and quality of life of Medford's citizens, and the beauty and quality of ~~its~~ the City's environment.

The State Legislature has granted municipalities the right and responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of their residents through the creation and enactment of regulations. Zoning powers further allow municipalities to "regulate the use of land, buildings and structures to the full extent of independent constitutional powers of cities and towns to protect the health, safety and general welfare of their present and future inhabitants," according to MGL Chapter 40A.

2. **Appointments:**

- a. ~~The Medford Tree Committee members shall serve without compensation. The~~ Committee shall consist of five Medford residents and up to 10 members total; one appointment made by City Council and all additional appointments made by the Mayor-, subject to confirmation by the Medford City Council. Two youth members shall be between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two at the time of their appointment.
- b. ~~At least one member of the committee will hold a license as MA Certified Arborist demonstrate expertise in the field of urban forestry and/or International Certified Arborist, or similar certification.)~~ landscape design. Medford residency is not required if the requisite expertise is demonstrated.
- c. ~~On~~ Upon formation of the Medford Tree Committee, two members shall be appointed for a term of three years, two members shall be appointed for a term of two years, and one member shall be appointed for a term of one year. Thereafter, each member shall be appointed for a term of three years. Each term shall expire at the end of the appropriate fiscal year, ~~provided however, with the~~

Commented [1]:

You may want to review some of the divisions that relate to other City Committees and determine if anything should be added or changed here.

Commented [2]:

is there a process for removing ppl? If legal decisions, smaller body and alternates. For this, advising/education, as large as possible for ppl to draw from. Remove for nonparticipation, so you can meet quorum.

Commented [3]:

Do we want these people to be Medford resident? or someone who either lives or works in Medford?

Commented [4]:

Trees Medford would like to make this softer.

Commented [5]:

This may not be practically possible and you may want to make it a preference as opposed to a requirements.

Commented [6]:

Are there terms? People can politely step down.

Commented [7]:

Stipends: if no legal decisions, no stipend.

understanding that members of the Medford Tree Committee shall continue to serve, beyond the expiration of their term, until a replacement is appointed.

3. **Duties:** The Medford Tree Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the City on all matters concerning public Medford's trees. The duties may include but not be limited to:

a. Working with the Tree Warden on Public Tree Hearings and Landmark Tree Hearings, including documentation of and/or follow-up after tree hearings.

~~Ensure~~ Ensuring that the City adheres to provisions of M.G.L. 87 and Chapter 40-15C, governing shade trees on public ways and scenic roads, as well as applicable City ordinances.

b. ~~The committee's work will include~~ Studying considerations of management of the urban forest and environment as a whole or in particular neighborhoods or watersheds, such as including the perceived pace of tree removals in particular neighborhoods, considerations neighborhood; consideration of area flooding or increased flood risk caused by tree cutting in particular locations; exacerbation of the heat island effect in areas with poor canopy coverage; and erosion and sedimentation risk in steep terrains.

c. ~~Reviewing the Working with the Tree Warden and local groups to develop and recommend a Community Forestry Management Plan for adoption by the City Council provided by the DPW Forest Division. Review the administration's progress in implementing the Community Forestry Management Plan, and report any concerns to the City Council.~~

d. ~~Reviewing the Working with the Tree Warden on an annual report of tree-planting, tree-removal, and tree-maintenance activity. Request such annual report from the Mayor if one is not provided annually.~~

e. Promoting the creation of manuals ~~and other~~ guidance for planting, maintaining and removing trees from streets, parks and private land.

f. Promoting equity of tree planting across the ~~city~~ City including in neighborhoods identified as needing more trees.

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This section will likely require review, revisions and clarification once the amendments to Chapter 86 of the City Ordinances are finalized.

I recommend revising it generally to have the Committee serve in a more advisory capacity as to public shade trees as the Committee cannot usurp the statutory authority of the Tree Warden under c. 87 and you may not want to vest enforcement authority in a volunteer committee. Also the scope of this may cross into the jurisdiction of other City Boards, Committees, Officials etc.

I have highlighted particular paragraphs that may need review.

Commented [9]:

remove

Commented [10]:

No, this is DPW jurisdiction.

Commented [11]:

Review the plan

Commented [12]:

In my opinion, this is the jurisdiction of the Tree Warden, and Community Forestry Management Plan is duplicative to efforts already undertaken by the DPW. This committee can comment on the plan if they would like, but DPW/Tree Warden are responsible for management plan for the public trees.

Commented [13]:

Review if there is one, request one from the Mayor if there isn't.

Commented [14]:

This is already produced by the DPW under the of the jurisdiction of Mayor. This Committee may request a copy of that report.

g. Engaging in projects and activities that promote sustainable forestry and the long-term health of public trees in the City, including programs and community events.

h. Providing liaison and recommendations on tree-related matters to the City Council and all other ~~city~~City boards and commissions and to community organizations.

i. ~~Working with outside groups and the DPW/Department of Public Works to develop, maintain, and use an~~Regularly reviewing the inventory of existing public trees and forests, including historic and notable trees, in order to improve understanding, management, and protection of tree resources. Review the administration's ability to maintain the tree inventory, and report any concerns to the City Council.

j. Reviewing vegetation management plans from utilities to promote appropriate pruning of public trees.

k. Promoting knowledge and awareness of the benefits of trees and their impact on the quality of life.

l. Serving as a catalyst for community education and outreach related to trees and forests.

m. Serving as a means of publicizing and making available ~~city~~City information on trees.

n. Evaluating costs of mitigation and penalties by setting annual increases to keep pace with the actual market costs of mitigation as outlined in this ordinance.

a. ~~Evaluating~~Being available to assist the Tree Warden in intended placement of replacement trees.

p. s

Commented [15]:

Review tree inventory and administration's ability to maintain the tree inventory, report to City Council on status.

Commented [16]:

Will this be separate from the GIS Database the DPW will keep? That is OK if it is, I just need to know if the DPW is going to be expected to maintain another inventory.

Commented [17]:

Be available to assist the Tree Warden in...

Commented [18]:

To what end? The DPW and Tree Warden already does this, and we intend to improve this in-place obligation with a Urban Forestry Management Plan which we are working on.