

Lexington Tree Committee - Working session of Regulations Subcommittee
Minutes May 14, 2024 1:00 pm via Zoom

Present: Barbara Tarrh, Tim Lee, Gavin Grant, Rachel Summers, Nancy Sofen, Mark Conner, Pat Moyer, Alicia Morris, Gerry Paul. A quorum of the Tree Committee was present.

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm.

1. Recommendations for replacement trees for the 2 elms recently removed from Emery Park. Pat reported that the DPW has located 2 “New Harmony” American Elms, which could be planted this spring. The committee agreed that these trees are an excellent choice. We discussed alternatives should the elms not be available, and recommend that tulip tree, the fruitless sweetgum cultivar “Rotundiloba” or American basswood would all be acceptable. The elm has the best form for this location. Pat to communicate this to Dave Pinsonneault.
2. Discussion of the list of invasive trees to be exempt from tree bylaw mitigation. This list will include all trees, with two exceptions, that are on the MA Prohibited Plant List (MA PPL), plus those listed as “likely invasive” and recommended for inclusion on the MA PPL by the MA Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG). Also, those trees newly added to the list that are still permitted to be sold should not be accepted for mitigation planting or be planted by the town. It was agreed that it is premature to include those listed by MIPAG as having invasive tendencies, but those trees (Japanese tree lilac and zelkova) should not be accepted for mitigation planting or be planted by the town.

The two exceptions (meaning that mitigation will be required, although they are on the MA PPL) are Norway maple and black locust. We want to encourage retention of shade, and exempting Norway maple, which make up a large percentage of Lexington’s canopy, does not accurately reflect the value of mature Norway maples. The Tree Committee and DPW, through the Urban Forest Master Plan, should create a plan to systematically replace these trees. Belmont recommends removing small specimens and leaving larger ones until they decline, replacing them with native canopy trees. An attractive option is to exempt Norway maples with DBH below a certain threshold from mitigation, but that could be complicated for our online permit system. To be discussed with the DPW, IT and Town Counsel.

Black locust is native to the eastern US, though not indigenous to MA. It is not as ubiquitous as Norway maple, existing in pockets around town, and because its seed fall in place does not spread as widely. It provides shade and supports pollinators and other wildlife. For these reasons we do not support exempting it from mitigation at this time.

See draft [Lexington Invasive Tree List for Exemption from Tree Bylaw Mitigation](#). Nancy to share with Dave and Chris for their comments.

Adjourned around 2:40 pm.