Minutes
Public Hearing (cont'd)
UNITIL Storm Resiliency Program
September 23, 2019

Meeting Posted: Yes
Place: Town Hall, 17 Main Street, Lunenburg, MA
Time: 6:35 PM

Present: Matthew Allison, Tanner Cole, Gregory Bittner, Adam R. Burney
Also Present: Tree Warden John Rodriquenz
Absent: Paula Bertram

The hearing continuation was to review a request to prune and/or remove trees along Leominster Road from West Street to Lancaster Avenue, and along Lancaster Avenue from Massachusetts Avenue to Rolling Acres under MGL Ch 40, Section 15C, Scenic Road Designations and under MGL Ch 87, Section 3, Cutting of Public Shade Trees.

The applicant, UNITIL, was represented by System Arborist Sara Sankowich, and Forestry Supervisor Dave Clapham.

A site walk was held September 17th to view some the trees identified by UNITIL. This evening, UNITIL is proposing some options with UNITIL’s preferred option being the removal of 16 trees. The next option would be the approval of the trees discussed on the field walk. UNITIL would also like a decision on pruning. One is ground-to-sky pruning and the other is pruning around conductors.

Tree Warden J. Rodriquenz was in agreement with a list submitted by his representative after the September 17th site walk. He noted the area under consideration is a major gateway to the Town with beautiful older trees and the Town is being cautious in its approach to tree pruning and/or removal.

Rhonda Lisio, 181 Reservoir Road- read a public comment into the record in opposition to tree cutting.

Katey Adams, Peninsula Drive- asked what the scope of the project is beyond ‘the list’. She is of the opinion that the Town should mark the trees it wants removed.

S. Sancowich noted that whatever trees are approved this evening by the Board under Scenic Roads will then go before the Select Board under the Shade Tree Law.

Originally UNITIL recommended 27 trees, that list has been reduced to 13 as a result of the site walk and input from the Planning Board, Select Board, and Tree Warden.

M. Allison noted one of the trees (#6) in dispute is located on the Common near the gazebo. The Tree Warden’s consultant recommended trimming of #6, not removal. There are also two trees (#12 and #24) on Lancaster Avenue in dispute.
G. Bittner inquired if any of the trees listed would be covered under normal pruning, and not just under the SRP. S. Sancowich responded that is one of the choices for the Board to make this evening; the Board can choose regular pruning or SRP pruning. If a tree is not removed, it would be pruned according to the Board’s specifications. A. Burney wanted the Board to be aware that the SRP is a “funding” term. UNITIL is inquiring if it can remove specified trees and then UNITIL will determine its funding mechanism.

M. Allison read into record a letter provided to the Board from resident Amory Phelps. She opined that the priority of the Select Board is “the beauty of the trees and streets”. She disagreed and “wants the Town to put its people first while making the right decisions about how best to preserve our forestry”.

UNITIL is working with its partner for energy-saving trees - Arbor Day Foundation. They hope to be offering Sugar Maple, Tulip Tree, and Sweet Gum for large tree replacement and Serviceberry, Witch Hazel, Sweet Bay, and Magnolia for small.

K. Adams, Peninsula Drive- Thinks things should be left alone. She would rather deal with a power outage then have the trees taken.

G. Bittner made Motion to close the Hearing, T. Cole Seconded, all aye.

Hearing closed 7:23 PM

Documents used at meeting:
UNITIL Proposed Vegetation Management Work Summary and Meeting Decision Recording
Risk Assessment Forms
Storm Resiliency Program Narrative to include Tree Listing