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Gary Christenson, Mayor

Monday, July 2, 2018

Dear Residents:

I want to thank each of you who took the time to get involved regarding the trees that are affected by our sidewalk and roadway improvement project. Whether you called, emailed, or testified at the public hearing, your advocacy did not go unnoticed and is an indicator that by working together we can make our community a better place.

Throughout this project, the goal has always been to preserve trees while meeting legal requirements for access and being mindful of public safety. A certified arborist, Andrew DeSantis, was retained to evaluate the condition of trees within the scope of the work. Upon assessment, Mr. DeSantis concluded that many of the trees were not in good condition, not thriving and would not survive the additional stress resulting from the construction activities. He also identified issues with the overall stability of some trees and was concerned not only with their relative health, but also with possible damage that had already occurred during earlier construction projects. For these reasons, coupled with the general condition of the trees, he recommended the removal of 94 trees.

At the public hearing and through written communications, the overwhelming majority of feedback received reflected the position that although a tree may not be thriving, it should be retained if safe and if reasonable accommodations for access and safe passage can be met. After further consideration and evaluation, we have made several changes to the original recommendation to remove 94 trees. An updated chart is attached that identifies the tree and includes the condition/issues, the initial recommended action and the City's decision. It reflects the definite removal of 28 trees, the retaining of 7 trees contingent on easements with property owners, and the preservation of 59 trees contingent on further evaluation of the feasibility of constructing compliant sidewalks without adverse impact on adjacent private properties or public travel ways, curbs and sidewalks.

On the trees that had general consensus to be removed because they were damaged, diseased, or deemed a public safety hazard, we will replace the tree taken down with a new tree as conditions allow. In addition, trees removed after further evaluation or in the event an easement is not secured will be replaced with a new tree as conditions allow. We will also seek to plant a tree that is conducive to an urban setting like ours so that it does not pose any accessibility issues resulting from the lifting of the sidewalk once the tree matures.

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Strong Past... Proud Future

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I would like to publicly thank Malden resident and Arborist Alec Stein who volunteered his time to assist us with taking a second look at a number of the trees on the original list. I would also like to acknowledge Public Works Director Bob Knox, City Engineer Yem Lip and Hayner/Swanson, Inc.'s Steve O'Neill along with Arborist Andy DeSantis who have been working with the City since the inception of this year's roadwork project.

Again, thank you for your time and effort. Please let me know if you have any questions at 781-397-7000, ext. 6 or at mayor@cityofmalden.org.

Sincerely,



GARY CHRISTENSON
Mayor, City of Malden