TOWN OF ARLINGTON
Department of Public Works
51 Grove Street
Arlington, Massachusetts 02476
Office(781) 316-3320 Fax (781) 316-3281

Engineering Division

Gibbs School – Curb Work & Tree Removal Request Memorandum

To: Joseph A. Curro; Board of Selectmen, Chairman
From: Wayne Chouinard; Town Engineer
Date: March 22, 2018
Re: Public Shade Tree Removal – Foster Street

In conjunction with the Gibbs School reconstruction, sidewalk work and road resurfacing is proposed on both Tufts Street and Foster Street as part of the Town's 2018 Road Rehabilitation Project. This work is to be performed by the Town's Road Contractor and it will consist of curb realignment to provide a student drop-off area, new sidewalks, and the installation of accessible curb ramps associated with new crosswalks at the intersection of Andrew Street and Foster Street.

In preparation for this work, the Engineering Division submitted requests for permits to remove two (2) public shade trees located in the work zone. These two trees are labeled as "Tree #1" and "Tree #2" respectively on the attached *Tree Removal Sketch*. The request to remove Tree #1 was related due to its proximity to a proposed accessible curb ramp for a new crosswalk. The objective of the Engineering Division is to complete this work without removing the tree and the request was submitted to avoid delays should it be determined its removal is required during construction. The request to remove Tree #2 is based on its location within a proposed student drop-off area. The location and extent of the proposed drop-off area was requested by the Arlington School Department upon the recommendation of the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee. To achieve the requested extents, Tree #2 must be removed.

Subsequent to receipt of these requests from the Engineering Division, separate public hearings were scheduled and held by the Tree Warden, Tim Lecuivre, on March 12 & 19, 2018, for the removal of Tree #1 and Tree #2 respectively. Following the first hearing, the Tree Warden informed the Engineering Division that an objection to the removal of both trees had been received in writing (attached) and thus a permit could not be issued for the removal of the requested trees. No further objections were received during either hearing. As such, and in accordance with MGL Chapter 87, Section 4, the Engineering Division seeks approval for the removal of the trees from the Board of Selectmen.

Please accept the following comments in response to the items listed in the objection letter received by the Tree Warden for consideration in your decision. As was previously noted, included with this request is a sketch of the area indicating the location of the two (2) trees in question, proposed work locations and notes. If this request is approved, the Engineering Division will work with the Tree Warden to prepare a plan to replace the trees in suitable quantity and size as is required by State Law, and in accordance with the Town by-laws and/or street tree planting plan.

Comments

- There are many aspects to consider during the construction of the curb ramps at the proposed crosswalk near Tree #1, including the following:
    - Elevation at back of sidewalk
    - Height of curb reveal
    - Transition from ramp entrance
    - Presence of roots determined after existing sidewalk is removed
    - Slope of roadway gutter
    - Location of corresponding curb ramp

  The goal is to construct the curb ramps and curb modifications without impacting Tree #1. Unfortunately, it is not easy to completely ascertain the requirements until the existing sidewalks and ramps are removed. During construction the ramps and curb line will be layed out and the location and condition of the tree roots ascertained. The road contractor, Engineering Division and Tree Warden will be on-site to best determine how to construct the ramps and protect the tree if possible. If the ramp can be aligned and constructed in compliance with ADA requirements without affecting Tree #1, then removal will not be necessary.
- The area for vehicle drop-off was evaluated by members cons the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee and it was determined that the standard 88 ft used for parallel parking spaces would not be sufficient. Due to site and accessibility considerations for a ramp on the school property, the pull out area must begin prior to the tree closest to Broadway (Tree #2) and cannot extend further towards Andrew Street than is currently shown.
- The goal of the proposed drop-off area is not to increase automobile use, but to provide safer access & egress for students entering and exiting cars during drop off/pickup times at the school. For the crosswalk/ramps it is to provide ADA compliant ramps at a cross walk within a designated school zone.