



**CITY OF STAMFORD**  
 OFFICE OF OPERATIONS  
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**Urban Forestry Working Group  
 Kick-Off Meeting  
 Minutes**

<b>Location:</b>	10-14, Stamford Government Center + Teams		
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, August 15, 2024		
<b>Time:</b>	10:00 am -11:00 am		
<b>Attendees:</b>	Matt Quiñones, Luke Bittenwieser, Bonnie Kim Cambell, Bob Clausi, Nette Compton, Melanie Hollas, Ron Markey, Erin McKenna, Michael Moore, Danielle Petretta, and Nina Sherwood.		
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Invitee</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Welcome and Introductions	Matt Quiñones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matt Quiñones began by thanking everyone for agreeing to participate in the Stamford Urban Forestry Working Group. The Group was formed to centralize activity around this topic and ultimately to contribute to a comprehensive vision to enhance, protect, and value Stamford’s urban forest and canopy cover. The Working Group will bring together public and private experts and advocates to provide consistency and transparency; coordinate community engagement, education, and outreach; and, recommend any potential policy or regulatory changes. Matt also mentioned that Danielle will coordinate the group’s activities.</li> </ul>
2 & 3	Tree inventory update and other grants and initiatives.	Erin McKenna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erin McKenna shared the status of the Stamford Tree Inventory. The inventory recorded every tree and tree bed in the city’s rights-of-way. (This does not include parks, schools, or private property.) The consultant, Davey Resource Group, is currently</li> </ul>



			<p>conducting field verifications. The inventory has identified about 2,500 planting opportunities citywide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inventory identifies each tree, species, location, size, health, and condition. It also identifies empty tree pits and areas lacking trees.</li> <li>• Consultants will be able to provide a preview of the data in Tree Keeper to this group in November.</li> <li>• The City was also awarded a \$1M grant for tree planting, but the grant has not arrived yet.</li> <li>• The Stamford Downtown Special Services District conducted a downtown street inventory last summer which is included in the citywide inventory.</li> <li>• Bob Clausi presented the updated Inland Wetland and Watercourse regulations to be adopted by the Board of Reps which will extend the distance of the Board’s review and permit area from 25 feet from an inland wetland to 50 feet.</li> </ul>
4	Open Discussion on Goals and Outcomes of Working Group	All	<p>The group discussed many on-going urban challenges including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• street tree maintenance and funding;</li> <li>• issues between public and private tree rights and benefits;</li> <li>• coordination of tree planting and maintenance on state roadways;</li> <li>• tree bed size;</li> <li>• sidewalk disruption from growing tree roots, repair responsibility, and the use of flexible and pervious materials;</li> <li>• tree health and invasive species;</li> <li>• the need for more expertise in tree care and maintenance including the opportunity to provide specialized, career-oriented training especially with youth; and</li> <li>• securing community involvement through information, education, and stewardship programs.</li> </ul>



5	<b>Next Steps and Action Items</b>
	Forward any suggestions for additional members of this group including Thomas Turk.
	Share ideas for goals and actions for this group and/or any relevant educational materials. Circulate the Stamford Street Tree Manual and revisions to the Environmental Protection Board regulations.
	Schedule a follow-up meeting late September/early October.
	Hold a meeting to review progress of the street tree inventory and mapping with consultant in November.
	Coordinate tree planting and maintenance with sidewalk repairs, replacement projects, and roadway intersection upgrades.
	Develop a city web page so that the public can access the information from the street tree inventory.
	Develop criteria to prioritize equitable, tree-planting decisions.
	Provide more public outreach and information on neighborhood projects to local residents, including with local faith-based organizations/individuals.

<b>City of Stamford Urban Forestry Working Group Members</b>	
Matt Quiñones	Director of Operations
Ralph Blessing	Land Use Bureau Chief
Luke Buttenwieser	Transportation Planner, Transportation, Traffic, and Parking
Bonnie Kim Cambell	Stamford Board Representative, D-5
Bob Clausi	Executive Director, Environmental Protection Board
Nette Compton	President and CEO, Mill River Park Collaborative
Melanie Hollas	Chair, Parks & Rec Commission, Pollinator Pathway Stamford
Ron Markey	Landscape Specialist and Tree Warden
Erin McKenna	Senior Park Planner
Michael Moore	President, Stamford Downtown Special Services District
Danielle Petretta	Environmental Sustainability Coordinator
Nina Sherwood	Stamford Board Representative, D-8