



## *City of Newburyport Tree Commission*

### Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2023

The meeting convened at 6:35 pm.

**Tree Commission members present:** Paul Knowlton (Chair), Paul Harrington (Financial Secretary, Marcia Edson (Secretary), Stephanie Pellegrini, Jean Berger, Marilyn Cohodas, Scott Hanley, Becky MacKnight (Alternate)

**Tree Warden:** Mike Hennessey

**Absent:** Bb Uhlig (Vice-Chair),

### **Public comment:**

Tony Pettigrew, 1 LeValley Ln. – Tony was concerned about the condition of 2 red maples in front of his home, that he felt were excessively pruned by the DPS tree crew. He shared photos to illustrate how the trees no longer provide privacy or street appeal due to this recent pruning. He said he was not notified of the work and was shocked to see what had happened to the trees. Mike Hennessey explained the tree crew had completed a work order submitted for another property on LeValley. Mike explained that he had just begun his work as Tree Warden, and he was sympathetic to Tony's complaint. Going forward, Mike assured Tony that he too wants to protect our urban canopy and he will work with the Tree Commission to improve the process caring for the city's trees. Tony thanked Mike and the Tree Commission for being so reasonable.

### **Tree Warden report:**

Mike shared photos of properties with trees that need consideration for removal. Some are high hazard trees while others are invasive or both:

15 Olive St. Norway Maple. High hazard tree, posted to be removed Nov. 28.

6 Johnson St. – Crimson King Norway Maple

6 Pine St. Norway Maple – Mike has consulted with the developer about 3 replacement trees.

4 Hope Ave. – Crimson King Maple – New owners of property met with Mike to discuss donation and replacement of tree that the was taken down.

DPS received requests for tree removals from residents at 35 and 37 Kent St. and 11 Ocean St. Mike requested that Commissioners visit the sites before the next meeting. Mike explained that the resident must post the request two weeks before the Tree Commission meeting, then present the rationale for the tree removal at the Tree Commission meeting. Commissioners vote, but the Tree Warden has the final say. Mike stated that there is Mass State Law, as well as City Ordinances to follow. Becky asked what kind of criteria the Tree Commission should consider for tree replacements and how to consider a "public benefit" if a tree is taken. After some discussion, Jean, Becky, Marcia, and Mike agreed to meet to review the ordinance and formulate criteria for the Tree Commission to use to evaluate a request for tree removal. Paul K. requested that they prepare the draft for review at the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mike was pleased to announce that all 40 work orders have been completed since he was appointed Tree Warden.

**Secretary's report:**

Motion by Jean to approve minutes of the September 14, 2023, meeting, seconded by Marilyn. Minutes approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's report:**

Paul H. explained the Year-to-date financial report. He pointed out that the Bromfield and A.G. Cutter trust fund amounts were adjusted and an additional \$15,000 was requested from FoNT. Paul will be meeting with Cris Miller to discuss this and the overall timing of FoNT contributions.

**Social Media update:**

Paul K. commented on Jane Niebling's informative article in the Nov. 13 issue of the Daily News. He asked if there was a way to post it on social media. Marilyn agreed that would be useful, but unsure of how to do it.

**FoNT report:**

Steph reported that the FoNT website is still being revised.

**Fall Planting 2023:**

Paul K. spoke about the difficulties that occurred during the planting. Because pits were not ready and dig safes not completed, planting was delayed even though the trees had been delivered. Paul H. has also had trouble with invoices remaining unpaid. Mike agreed that there needs to be better communication with DPS regarding the plans for planting and paying vendors in a timely way. Paul K. suggested he meet with Bob, Paul H., Wayne, and Mike to discuss these issues.

There was additional discussion about the optimal number of trees we can plant in the spring. Mike suggested capping the number of trees to be planted at 50.

**Tree Inventory**

The inventory of new trees still needs to be done. Paul H. has entered the new plantings, but someone needs to go out, photograph and document on the GPS. Mike offered to have DPS help in the winter when things slow down.

**New Business:**

- Paul K. brought up the issue of last month's meeting cancellation due to lack of a quorum. He suggested moving to a hybrid format to make it easier for commissioners and the public to access Tree Commission meetings. Marcia said she would check with the library to see if that was possible.
- Paul K. announced that Scott will be leaving the Commission when his appointment is up in February. Paul urged members to reach out to prospective members for the Tree Commission, so that there can be a timely transition. He suggested considering someone with a financial background because Paul H. is responsible for so much in that area. Mike suggested that eventually some of the financial work could be moved to DPS to alleviate some of the work Paul H. does. Paul H. and Mike will meet to discuss how to better coordinate our efforts with DPS.

**Old Business:**

Get a Tree document - Jean and Steph shared the revised copy. Motion to approve made by Marcia, seconded by Marilyn. Unanimous vote. Jean will send the document to Mike to post on the website.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Jean, seconded by Marilyn. Unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, December 14, 2023, in the Program Room of the Library.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marcia Edson, Secretary