



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 11 March 2021

Zoom meeting

Meeting convened at 6:07 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Constance Preston (Chair), Sheila Taintor (Vice-Chair & Secretary), Paul Bevilacqua, Scott Hanley, Andrew Soracco, Sue Brown (Treasurer), Paul Harrington (alternate)

Tree Commission members absent: Jamie Tuccolo (Tree Warden, ex-officio)

Public in attendance: Evan Petty, 229 Water Street

Reports

Secretary

The Commission approved the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Meeting.

Treasurer

As there were no transactions (expenses or deposits) in January or February, there was no report this month.

Tree Warden

The Tree Warden was absent, so there was no update from him.

Planting

Spring 21 Planting

Spring 2021 planting has been finalized with 70 trees: 45 trees utilizing the funds from PCI Synthesis and 25 community trees. Connie has checked with the vendors we use regularly to make sure that they will be able to handle 70 trees. They feel this is manageable with appropriate planning.

Tree Warden Jamie Tuccolo has reserved \$12,000 out of DPS funds to be able to plant 20 of the 25 community trees, if necessary.

Connie met with Rob Merenda from the Housing Authority to place six trees at Kelleher Park and one at Horton Terrace utilizing PCI funds. Andrew will place the remaining 38 at the Newburyport Business Park.

The locations for all trees at the Business Park and one community tree will need to be marked once the snow melts and the ground permits.

RFPs for tree purchase will be sent to Northeast Nurseries, Bigelow Nurseries and Kaknes Landscape Supply. RFPs for planting will be sent to Plants and Pleasantrees, Valley Tree and Artistic Landscaping (last two names provided post meeting).

Coastal Landscape will be invited to bid on the watering again this year.

Fall 21 Planting

There are currently 22 trees on the community planting list that will be delayed until Fall 2021 provided we receive funds from the City.

Additional comments from Chair

Connie consulted on development projects at: 21 & 25-27 Hancock S., 7 Shandel Dr. and 10 Reilly St.

Connie Preston attended the Tree City USA Virtual Conference on Feb 10, 17 & 24 and found the conference extremely interesting. If any Commissioners would like to watch some of the recorded sessions, check with Connie for access information to them.

Grants/Donations

Connie invited Evan Petty, a potential commissioner who is interested in learning grant writing, to attend our meeting. Grant writing is an important skill set for the Tree Commission and we are looking forward to having someone on board to handle this for us.

Education

Although there is enthusiasm for having a student representative on the Tree Commission, it will not happen this year due to the difficult situation that teachers and students are in due to COVID-19.

Old Business

Annual Tree Commission Calendar

The Commission reviewed two versions of the calendar: the condensed and the fuller calendar of Tree Commission activities. Sheila suggested adding receipt of the Tree Warden Reports for the Preliminary Annual Report (due in March) and the Final Annual Report (due in July) and Paul Harrington suggested adding inspection and post planting reports after the spring & fall plantings. Connie will add these items to the condensed calendar and tidy up the fuller calendar for the April meeting, to be voted on then.

Tree Commission position descriptions

Some minor changes suggested by Paul Bevilacqua will be discussed at the April meeting.

New Business

2022 Budget Proposal

The Commission unanimously approved the FY 22 budget proposal for \$29,346 which Connie had drafted. These funds will be to plant and water an additional 45 trees in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 as well as water existing first and second year trees.

If we do not get the full amount requested, we will plant less trees so as to reserve roughly \$7500 to water existing trees and the 70 trees to be planted this spring. Paul Bevilacqua stressed the importance having the City Council understand that planting trees without watering them is a waste of money and wondered how we will pay for watering this May and June, which are in FY 2021. These waterings will be paid for using the last of our funds from the CPA and the Bromfield and Morrill grants.

FoNT currently has \$9K that they can make available to the TC to water existing trees in the event that we do not receive an operational budget in FY 2022.

Newburyport Resiliency Plan

Sheila made a brief presentation of mentions of trees and the Tree Commission in the Newburyport Climate Resiliency Plan. The Commission voted unanimously to establish a subcommittee to study the Plan in more depth and report back on further steps we can take. Since some members had had to leave early, Sheila will send an email asking who would like to be part of the subcommittee.

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheila Taintor, Secretary

Next meeting via Zoom: Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 6 PM