



## City of Newburyport Tree Commission

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 14, 2022, 6:00 pm

The meeting convened at 6:06 pm.

**Tree Commission members present:** Sheila Taintor (Chair), Paul Knowlton (Vice-Chair), Marcia Edson (Secretary), Marilyn Cohodas, Scott Hanley, Jamie Tuccolo (Tree Warden, ex-officio)

**Absent:** Paul Harrington, Sue Brown

**Public in attendance:** Jeremy Pymonto, 30 Storeybrooke Road  
Alicia Casilio, 39 Liberty Street  
Chris Gasbarro, 30 Daniel Lucey Way

#### Open Time for Residents

Alicia Casilio raised concerns about seemingly healthy trees being removed by residents in her neighborhood. She cited Cambridge as an example, where the city has limitations and a permitting process for resident removal of trees. Paul Knowlton agreed that losing trees in dense neighborhoods like downtown and the south end is hard to accept, but it is a property owner's right. The Tree Commission's mandate is for street trees. Marcia also agreed and mentioned that we need to do more to educate the public about the environmental benefits of trees. More discussion ensued about other ways to support residents who might not be able to rake leaves or prune trees. Alicia volunteered to investigate the policies in Cambridge to see if there was some information that might be useful for our Commission.

#### Reports

##### Tree Warden

###### 1. EAB update

Jamie reported that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation reached emergency proportions in the west end where twenty-three trees were taken down. Sheila noted that there are 273 ash trees inventoried in the city and asked if they had been treated. Jamie said Lance tracked the EAB, and they followed state and USDA EAB protocols. They will reassess in the spring in hopes that the cold weather will kill any remaining EAB larvae. Jamie posted *Information on EAB* on the Tree Commission website and DPS Facebook page and has also responded to a few emails regarding the EAB.

Ms. Casilio asked Jamie if there could be some sort of posting before the trees were cut down. Jamie said that he would typically notify neighbors within 24-48 hours, but that this was an emergency situation, and no one was notified. Mr. Pymento, who has an ash tree and first learned of the EAB at this meeting, asked if this was a typical way to eradicate the EAB. Jamie responded that it depends. Treatments are costly and the turnaround time can be a problem. Sometimes when trees are inundated with the EABs, you have to take immediate action. He invited Mr. Pymento to review the EAB information on the TC website and email him with any questions.

Sheila inquired about how the downed wood was treated. Jamie explained that it was chipped, piled in a separate area in the yard waste facility on Colby Farm Lane, and labeled “Do not remove.”

## 2. Removal of five honey locust trees at 63-65 State St.

Jamie reported that three trees were cut down in front of the Newburyport 5 Savings Bank, 63-65 State St. (The actual number is 5). Jamie stated he has been in contact with the bank representative for the past 6 months. He read a letter from the bank requesting the removal of the honey locust trees to prepare for the new lighting project for the building. The letter also mentioned “heaving bricks on the sidewalks.” The letter stated that the trees would be replaced in spring 2023. Jamie confirmed he would work with the TC to select replacement trees for spring planting, at the bank’s cost. He gave an example, suggesting that removing five and putting in two-inch trees, then eight two-inch trees would make sense and benefit everybody and be more pedestrian friendly avoiding brick problems. The bank would also make a donation to FONT.

## 3. Additional discussion

Sheila asked Jamie for help in moving a large tree at 5 Pond St. The tree, a Green Vase Zelkova, was mistakenly planted there last fall and is now much too large and too close to the utility pole. Jamie explained the complications involved, including the size of the root ball, the proximity to a pole and connecting with National Grid. Paul Knowlton volunteered to meet Jamie at the site to review the situation in the next few days. Jamie said his crew would do their best to get the tree out and replanted.

## 4. DPS / Tree Commission coordination

Sheila asked Jamie how the TC could best coordinate with DPS when they are replacing streets and sidewalks. Jamie explained the city’s five-year plan alternating sidewalk and pavement work. For example, sidewalks will be done in summer 2023 in wards 1, 3, and 5. There are plans

to re-engineer Plummer Ave., and Sheila mentioned that it would be an ideal time to work together on siting new trees and tree pits, incorporating traffic calming measures and adding shade. Paul Knowlton mentioned he noticed new tree pits on Barton St. and Jamie confirmed they were dug during the sidewalk work and he was happy to do those for the residents.

### **Secretary**

Sheila asked if there were any changes or additions to the minutes of the June 9, 2022, meeting. Paul Knowlton moved to accept; Sheila seconded, and they voted to approve. Sheila will check with the City Clerk to see if we need more than 2 people present at the meeting to approve the minutes. If so, we will vote again at the next meeting.

### **Treasurer**

Sheila reported that the City Council accepted \$9,000 from FoNT and it has been deposited in the Revolving Fund. The Tree Commission has a \$10,000 annual spending limit on funds in the Revolving Account. Ethan Manning confirmed that if we need to spend additional monies from the Revolving Account, we would make a request to the City Council, but he did not think there would be any problem doing this. Sheila clarified the TC budget is under DPS tree budget and totals \$20,000, not the \$30,000 we requested. FoNT donations come to the TC when TC requests the monies.

Regarding additional monies, Sheila pointed out that the developer of 21-23 Middle St. agreed to pay \$650 to replace the tree at his site. Also, Jim McCarthy suggested contacting the Howard Benevolent Society for a donation. Sheila will send a request for \$14,000 to purchase, plant, and water twenty trees. Sheila will invite Jim to speak to the TC at a future meeting. National Grid will also be donating an additional twenty trees.

The Commissioners unanimously voted to accept the June Treasurer's Report after a motion by Paul Knowlton, second by Marilyn Cohodas.

### **Spring 2022 Planting**

Sheila stated that forty-two trees were planted. There were fourteen ball and burlap trees which each cost \$25 more, and two additional brick pits dug at \$100. In the future we need to double check to make sure the pits are large enough to accommodate a B&B.

Paul and Scott are working on inventory of the new trees but having some issues with the password for MIMAP. Sheila will send Steve Lopez's contact information.

### **Fall 2022 Planting**

There are thirty-one trees on the list for fall planting.

## **Moving Trees**

*36 Marlboro St.* Sheila received a request from Shauna and Matt Pieniasek to have their landscaper move and replant the recently planted red oak closest to their house to protect their hedge. Marcia mentioned that in mid-March she and Sheila had discussed a row of trees in front of the property with Mrs. Pieniasek. After some discussion, a motion was made stating that since the three trees were sited specifically to maintain the balance of the other adjacent trees, and in the best interest of the city, the trees should remain as planted. The motion passed on a unanimous vote. Sheila will notify the Pieniaseks.

*25 Oak St.* Marcia reported that Elizabeth Heath of 25 Oak St. inquired about removing and replacing the five-year-old Trident Maple in front of her house because the tree is so small and does not seem to be thriving. She would prefer a large, more majestic species. Both Marcia and Paul Knowlton agreed that the tree looks small and spindly. After some discussion, Sheila agreed to submit a work order for Lance to evaluate the health of the tree. Marcia will inform the residents.

## **Education**

Chris Gasbarro joined the meeting after the public comment time but wanted to ask about the lack of information and communication with residents of regarding the removal of trees on Daniel Lucey Way, due to the EAB infestation. He was curious as to why the tree cutting was so drastic and if other options had been explored, such as the use of wasps. Sheila shared the information Jamie had reported earlier and agreed that Chris' point on educating the public about the EAB was important. She is drafting a piece that outlines basic facts about the EAB, how to recognize it and how to manage it. Marilyn offered to assist. Chris expressed his appreciation for the response he received.

## **Twitter**

Paul Knowlton and Marilyn Cohodas are continuing to figure out a simple and effective way to activate a Twitter account.

## **New Business**

Sheila stated that during a call to DCR for EAB information, she was informed of this statute regarding the removal of shade trees: Massachusetts State Law, Ch. 87, section 3.

Sheila suggested that this statute, requiring a hearing, would apply to the State Street trees and any trees that a resident would want to take down. This suggests the city is not in compliance

with Ch. 87, section 3. The consensus was for Sheila to contact Jamie to discuss the statute and how to work together to meet the requirements stipulated in in the law.

### **Additional**

Tree pits – Regarding the tree pits that DPS recently added to Barton St during the sidewalk work, Paul Knowlton suggested that we might talk with Jamie about continuing that process with residents of streets undergoing sidewalk construction.

Motion to adjourn by Marcia Edson, Paul Knowlton, seconded, unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:09 PM.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, August 11, 2022, at 6:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marcia Edson, Secretary