



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 12 August 2021

Zoom meeting

Meeting convened at 6:03 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Constance Preston (Chair), Sheila Taintor (Secretary), Scott Hanley, Sue Brown

Tree Commission members absent: Paul Bevilacqua, Paul Harrington (alternate), Jamie Tuccolo (Tree Warden, ex-officio)

Public in attendance: Jim Shaw, 5 Pond Street

Open time for residents

Jim Shaw, 5 Pond Street, discussed the removal of a row of tall privet on City land by a neighbor on Central Place. Mr. Shaw and other neighbors were disturbed because the privet, which seems to be on City property according to the City map, had blocked their view of CVS. Mr. Shaw said the neighbor went through the City and got the ok to remove the trees. Connie Preston briefly explained the City street tree removal process, though privet is not a tree but a bush. The first step would be for the Tree Warden to determine whether the plants are definitively on City property. Mr. Shaw had spoken with the Tree Warden earlier and the Tree Warden had said he would take a look. Mr. Shaw will contact the Tree Warden again.

Reports

Secretary

The Commission approved the Minutes of the July 8, 2021 Meeting with changes discussed identifying material from updates.

Treasurer

The July Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

Tree Warden

Due to the Tree Warden's absence, there was no report.

Planting / Watering

201 new street trees were watered twice in July. Two additional waterings were cancelled due to rainy weather. The monthly cost of 4 waterings of 201 trees at \$8 per tree is \$6,432.



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There are currently 56 trees on the community planting list. 37 of these are prioritized: 19 are FoNT donations and 18 were requested in 2020. DPS funds will only cover the cost of 33. The TC currently has \$13,128 in the Revolving Funds account which could cover up to an additional 20 trees.

The Tree Commission voted 4-0 to plant 50 trees in fall, using the DPS funds for 33 of these trees and the Revolving Funds for 17 more trees. This will leave a small cushion in the Revolving Account and 6 trees on planting list.

We will use Tree Commission funds in the DPS account to water the 50 new trees plus 93 trees from earlier plantings, for a total of 143 trees. There will be 4 waterings in spring 2021 which will be paid with FY 2022 funds. FY 2023 funds will pay for the 11 summer and fall 2022 waterings and the 4 Spring 2023 waterings. The FY 2023 watering of the 143 trees will cost an estimated \$17,160.

If the Tree Commission should only receive \$20,000 in the FY 2023 budget, it will have \$2,840 to plant trees in FY 2023 which will only cover the purchase, planting and watering of 4 new trees. It is imperative that the Tree Commission seek additional funding to continue expanding the street tree canopy in Newburyport, either through a larger budget item or from other sources such as free cash and/or grants.

We are currently on track to have surplus money in our PCI Synthesis account of \$910. Bill Anderson from PCI confirms that the TC can utilize those funds for further waterings.

Although FoNT currently has approximately \$5,000 in their account which would normally pay for tree planting, it needs to commission a new memorial tree sculpture since the current tree is full. FoNT President Cris Miller estimates that it will be at least \$4,000 but has asked the artist for an estimate.

The Spring St project raised \$2,500 from residents to purchase 10 trees. The species still need to be determined, but these trees will be planted in the fall.

Connie Preston consulted on a development project at 10 Sylvester St, 163 Crow Lane, 10 Briggs St, and 22/24 Olive St.

Peter Bettencourt from Newburyport Housing Authority reached out to the Tree Commission about potentially planting more trees at Horton Terrace but has not returned further phone calls.



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Grants/Donations

Jane Niebling is willing to do contract work to write grants for the TC at a cost of \$250 per grant application. Sheila will take charge.

Education

There was not report as Andrew Soracco has resigned from the Commission.

Community Outreach

There was no update.

Old Business

Tree Removal Hearing

Sheila Taintor mentioned that the Tree Removal Hearing tab on the Tree Commission website still contains only one of the three documents. She will speak with Jamie Tuccolo again about adding the two additional documents.

Revision of Recommended Trees list

Sheila Taintor emailed Jamie Tuccolo requesting that Lance Ricard, City Arborist, meet briefly with a group of arborists to review the List of Recommended Street Trees on the website and explained that it could wait until the fall when Lance might be more available. Jamie did not feel Lance needed to attend any meeting, but that he would forward the list to Lance and then send us any input.

New Business

Discussion about Revolving Fund

Use of Revolving Fund monies is discussed above under Planting / Watering. Money in the Revolving Fund Account can be held from year to year.

Recruiting new Tree Commissioners

Scott Hanley has identified a potential Tree Commissioner after posting on Nextdoor Newburyport. Connie and Sheila will meet with Marcia Edson on Aug 17th.

Connie reported that she is discussing being a Commissioner with Paul Knowlton.



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The meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheila Taintor, Secretary

Next meeting via Zoom: Thursday, 9 September, 2021 at 6 PM