

City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2023

The meeting convened at 6:35 p.m.

Tree Commission members present: Paul Knowlton (Chair), Paul Harrington (Financial Secretary, Alternate), Stephanie Pellegrini, Becky MacKnight (Alternate, Jean Berger, Marylin Cohodas

Absent: Scott Hanley, Marcia Edson (Secretary), Bob Uhlig (Vice-Chair), Jenn Sullivan (Acting Deputy DPS Director)

General Announcements from the Chair:

- No Tree Commission meeting in July. The next meeting will be in August.
- Paul K. requested that Tree Commission members email him or update the “future trees” spreadsheet with possible locations for trees to provide more options.

Tree Warden Report: No report. Wayne Amaral could not make it to the meeting but plans to attend in August.

Secretary's Report: Motion by Jean to approve minutes of the May 11, 2023, meeting. Seconded by Becky MacKnight. Minutes approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Butler Street
 - Holly Mazur, Lynne Cote, and Jeff Andrews, who live on Butler Street provided comments about how they would like to have trees planted on their street.
 - Paul K. noted that he met with residents, visited the site, and agreed that it would be a great street to plant several trees. Photos of Butler Street were shared.
 - Residents noted that five trees had been taken down in the last few years. They provided the Tree Commission with a document signed by ten homeowners on the street who would like street trees planted. Holly Mazur noted that she had heard from the homeowners who had not had a chance to sign. They also agreed that they would like street trees.
 - Paul K. suggested that there could be some sort of cost sharing between residents and the Tree Commission for a mass planting of trees on Butler Street in Fall 2023.
 - Paul K. had provided Holly Mazur with detailed information on the Tree Commission process and asked Holly to share that with all the homeowners. She said she would do this.
 - Holly asked for clarification on how Friends of Newburyport Trees (FoNT) relates to the Tree Commission. Members of the Tree Commission explained how FoNT is a non-profit organization that provides a way for citizens to donate to pay for street trees since donations cannot be made to a City Commission directly.
 - Lynne Cote asked for clarification on the requirements for where a street tree can be planted. The Tree Commission provided some details, and indicated they would review this at the on-site meeting with Paul K.

- Next Steps: Paul K. will meet with Butler St. residents to mark potential spots for trees and then the Tree Commission will figure out how much that number of trees would cost. Residents can then decide amongst themselves how many trees they want, assuming a 50/50 split of the cost between residents and the Tree Commission.
- Jim McCarthy
 - Jim McCarthy said he wants to donate funding for ten trees for the Fall 2023 planting. He had two suggested locations:
 - Access road off High Street to the Senior Center. Paul K. noted that many citizens have asked the city to put new trees there. He said that the Tree Commission needs to clarify who has jurisdiction in that area.
 - Low Street along the Colby Farm Ln open space property. The logistics and jurisdiction of putting trees at this location were discussed and need further clarification with the city. Jim indicated that he would prefer large deciduous trees; Jean suggested oaks.
 - The Tree Commission thanked Jim for his continued support for tree planting in Newburyport.

FoNT Report: Stephanie reported that FoNT is restructuring. They will not be doing on-site tree work in the future but will focus on fundraising, outreach, and education. Stephanie and Paul K. agreed to meet with Wayne to discuss this transition. No financial update from FoNT.

Treasurer's Report: Paul H. provided an update on invoices paid to date for the spring planting. He noted that a tree from Bigelow was too small, so Bigelow credited the Tree Commission. Paul reviewed the FY24 budget and indicated that if the city provided the Tree Commission with \$40K, the Commission could plant ninety trees over two planting seasons. He noted that we would need to have forty-five tree sites per season identified.

Paul H. also noted that we need a list of our Fall 2023 trees by mid-June so that he can secure the trees and the best pricing. Given that the Fall 2023 planting list is not finalized, Paul K. suggested that the Tree Commission pick $\frac{1}{2}$ small trees and $\frac{1}{2}$ large trees and then find spots around the city later. The rest of the Tree Commission members agreed with this approach.

Social Media Update: Marilyn said she has reached out to the towns of Concord and Andover to ask how their Tree Commission uses social media. She is waiting to hear back from them. Marilyn also indicated that she has started to look into using Facebook for the Tree Commission.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. by Jean Berger, seconded by Becky MacKnight. Unanimous.

Next meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on August 10th, 2023, in the Program Room of the Newburyport Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky MacKnight