

Minutes of Newburyport Tree Commission

May 12, 2016

Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library

Meeting Convened at 7:00 PM.

Tree Commissioners (TC) present: David Dylewski (**DD**), Paul Bevilacqua (Secretary) (**PB**), Byron Getchell (**BG**), Ed Taylor (**ET**), Jane Niebling (**JN**), Wayne Amaral (Tree Warden and Deputy Director/Director of Operations Department of Public Services) ex-officio (**WA**)

Members Absent: Paul Harrington (Vice Chair and Treasurer) (**PH**), Sheila Taintor (**ST**), Crispin Miller (Chair) (**CM**)

Open time for Residents

Sandra Thaxter, 3 Oak Street, Board President and Jeff Esche, 30 Lime Street, Executive Director, Northeast Urban Forest Advocacy (NUFA) (501 c3) attended.

Jeff Esche presented current information on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation in Massachusetts and proposed that NUFA, the Tree Commission and Friends of Newburyport Trees partner on an EAB awareness outreach program with a two activity effort.

He argued that about 135 already inventoried Public Ash Trees are at stake. If EAB were to appear the trees can be saved/protected by chemical applications biannually for possibly 10 years. It is current theory that the EAB, which feeds solely on Ash species, acts as an invasion wave killing all the available Ash, leaving the EAB with no food or breeding environment and forcing them to move on. Costs of removal of dead or dying ash are estimated at \$400,000 over 5 years, prevention for 10 years about \$80,000 plus Newburyport would be able to save the trees! It could take a generation to plant and replace those trees.

NUFA offered to provide lists of the city's public ash trees, and over the next few weeks volunteers can tag the Ash tree at the address and call on the nearest resident asking them to monitor for possible EAB activity using the provided materials, identification cards etc. Call-ins will go to DPS/Tree Wardens' office 978-465-4463. Volunteers will respond to inspect. He committed NUFA to this project and asked the TC to also commit.

He also invited other organizations to participate in the informational booth at the Newburyport Farmers Market on May 29th (8:30 set up). He sees this as a good opportunity for all organizations to raise public awareness. Jack Ingram of Bartlett Tree will also be participating.

Report of the Secretary

The Minutes of the April 14 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Report of the Treasurer

The Treasurer was absent. **DD** in the absence of **PH and CM**, presented updated a financial report developed by **CM**. The report was approved unanimously.

Report of the Tree Warden (WA): May 2016

1. Tree Warden Summary for 2016.

35 High Hazard trees have been removed this year. The most recent trees are:

Crow Lane Sewer Pump Station @ Woodman Park

Curzon's Mill Road #63 (2 trees)

Curzon's Mill Road #6

Garnet Street #3 (2 trees)

High Street #120 (2 trees)

High Street #146

Lime Street #79

Low Street #193

Oakland St #39

Pine Street #7

Tyng Street #47

0 Non-High Hazard trees have been removed.

2. Tree City Award.

3. Preparing 2 tree pits for spring planting.

4. Green Street sidewalk construction should start in June with tree planting to follow.

Comments: Tree removal has increased substantially as high hazard trees are consistently being identified at increased rate. It appears that this is happening at such a pace because of the limited attention to planting and maintaining trees over the last 50 years or so. Many trees, for a variety of reasons, are coming to the end of their life span at the same time and need to be removed when they are judged to pose a danger to life and property a danger.

Committee Reports

Tree Regulation Committee

The Committee presented a one page overview/description of the Tree Plan which will now be posted on the website as an overview and guide/description of the components of the Newburyport Tree Plan. The proposal was unanimously approved and will be posted.

Planting and Pruning Committee

DD provided an overview of the reports which were presented.

Spring Planting 2016

BG reported that the 10 trees will be planted by the end of May.

Green Street

BG reported, as noted in the Tree Warden's report, that planting will likely occur in the early Fall upon completion of the sidewalk construction.

Pruning and Mulching

Saturday April 23 and April 30 were very successful days for pruning and mulching. There were three teams of Commissioners and volunteers, led by the **TC**. **DD** estimated that over 85% of all the trees planted by the **TC** have been pruned and mulched. There was a suggestion that additional days be added in the future for the Spring or in the Fall. The **TC** will give consideration to that possibility.

Collaborative Projects with FoNT

As previously noted **JN** reported that the **TC**, in collaboration with **FoNT**, has submitted two grant proposals to the CPA to support Gateway Projects 1 and 2 which had previously been accepted by the **TC**. One grant was for funds to purchase trees for Project 1, the Cornelius Doyle Triangle. The other is for the purchase of three trees for Project 2, Storey Avenue in front of the Home for Aged Men. **JN** will remain in contact with **FoNT** and will update the **TC** on the progress of the grant proposals. She noted that she will also submit a proposal to the area banks for similar funding.

Proposals are also being developed in regard to the Industrial Park.

River Valley Charter School Collaboration (RVCS)

ET confirmed that the **RVCS** students had participated in planting four trees on April 27 on the center strip on Perry Way opposite the School. Three of the trees were donated by **RVCS** and one by **FoNT**. **ET** gave recognition to the DPS workers who did an excellent job in preparing the site and assisting in the planting. Additionally, Andrew Willemsen, Director of the River Valley Charter School, was recognized for his work in securing the trees. **CM** will be asked to draft a letter from the **TC** and the Mayor, subject to her approval, thanking him for his generosity leadership in this matter. That opened a general conversation as to how to recognize and honor such individuals in the future.

Old Business

Update: Tree Care

Watering was scheduled to begin during the week of May 9, but was deferred for a week given the rain from the previous week.

FY 17 Budget

No information has been received as to the FY 17 budget request.

New Business

Maintenance of Street Tree Inventory

After discussion as to the condition/accuracy of the current Street Tree Inventory, it was agreed to request that the **TC** Chair appoint a subcommittee to review the existing inventory and to determine how it might be improved and maintained in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Paul M. Bevilacqua, Secretary

Next meeting: Thursday June 9, 2016 at 7 PM

Location: Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library