

Newburyport Tree Commission

Minutes April 10, 2014

Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library

Meeting Convened at 7:05 PM

Members present: E. Taylor (Chair) (**ET**), P Bevilacqua (Secretary) (**PB**), D. Dylewski (**DD**); B. Getchell (**BG**);

Absent: S. Taintor (**ST**); H. Kelleher (**HK**), P. Harrington (Vice Chair and Treasurer) (**PH**); A. Lafferty, Tree Warden and Deputy Director of the Department of Public Services, ex-officio (**AL**)

Others Present: J. Esche (**JE**); C. Miller (**CM**)

Appointee to the Commission:

CM attended in anticipation of his appointment to a voting position on the Commission. The second reading of his nomination by the City Council will be Tuesday the 15th. **CM** was welcomed by the Commissioners.

Report of the Secretary

The Minutes of the March 13 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Report of the Treasurer

The report of the Treasurer was submitted in advance by **PH** who was not able to attend the meeting. The clarity of the revised format was complimented by the Commissioners. The Commissioners agreed to remind the Treasurer that the Commission had previously decided to limit the content of the reports to funds under the control of the Tree Commission. The Treasurer was asked to remove the Urban Challenge Grant from the report effective immediately. There was also agreement that the report should be on a calendar month basis. Thus the report should include expenditures, encumbrances and balances at the end of each month. Finally, it was requested that each report be labeled as the period reported. For example the report reviewed was considered to be the March Treasurer's Report.

Tree Warden's Report

AL was not present due to military commitment. The Commission unanimously agreed to request that the Chair discuss the format/content of the Tree Warden's monthly report to the Commission with the Tree Warden. The Commission requested that the report include any street tree activity, such as removals, plantings, etc. which have occurred since the previous report. For example the recent removal of four large hazard trees would be included in the March report. Additionally, the Commission requested advance notice of tree removals.

Sub-Committee Reports

- **Planting and Pruning**

DD confirmed that pruning, trimming, and stake pulling will be completed on Arbor Day, Friday April 25 by three teams of volunteers, Valley Tree Services, and Jean Berger and Mark Delaney, both Massachusetts Certified Arborists, from the Green Jeans Design Company. The rain date will be Saturday, April 26th, with same times and location.

The teams will concentrate on the South and North Ends, pruning the smaller trees of the City's canopy and looking for dead and crossing branches. On the smaller side streets the focus will be on sidewalk and street clearance. Any stakes that are on the trees will be pulled as they should not remain in place more than one year. At present, most of the trees in the City have been planted for more than two years. Each truck will have a good supply of tree guards on board, to use on trees that are in need of one.

DD confirmed that a substantial number of sites have been identified. **DD** was not able to provide an update on the planting schedule at the meeting as he has not received confirmations from **AL**. **DD** reiterated that there will be appropriate locations for the trees that will be purchased with the \$4,800 authorized from the Revolving Fund. **DD** and other members of the Commission, as agreed, plan to be present to supervise the planting of the trees. **AL** has indicated that he will designate these Commissioners as agents of the City in carrying out the supervision.

- **Green Street Planting**

ET and **PB** attended the CPA meeting on March 25 and made a presentation for funds to complete the Green Street project. They also explained that additional time may be a needed to complete the work committed to in the current grant given potential delays in the overall Green Street project that will impact the planting of the trees. It appears that the contract for the sidewalk has been awarded and will soon begin. If so, the trees can be planted in the scheduled time period of April 15-June 15. As previously noted, given the variables there may need to be a strategic delay in the planting project.

OLD BUSINESS

- **DD** reported that there have been eight requests for tree evaluations since the last meeting on March 13.
- **Revolving Fund Memo of Understanding (MOU)**

ET and **PH** hope to meet with **AL** during the week of April 14 to sign the MOU which is necessary to implement the Revolving Fund. Revisions were made in the previous

version by Bill Squillace, in coordination with the Mayor's Office, to bring the language into line with the language of the Revolving Fund.

FY 15 Budget Update

There was no new to report on the status of the budget although the Mayor has indicated she will fund at least some of the request, like through the Revolving Fund.

New Business

- **Future Meeting Locations**

PB noted that Library space can only be scheduled three months in advance for meetings. The Children's Activity Room has been scheduled for May, June, and July.

- **Contract for Tree Care for April –November**

The Commission voted unanimously to award the contract to Classic Companies. The work will be funded by the balance of the 2009 CPA grant for that purpose and other sources to be identified. The contract will not exceed \$4,500 for trees planted in 2012 and 2013. It was not clear whether that will include trees planted in the Green Street parking lot. The total amount of the contract will not be finalized until the total number of trees involved is determined.

Discussion of how to expedite the planting process

- Commissioners expressed very strong concern over the lack of an expedited and certain planting process. The current process, especially when related roadwork is involved, does not include the timeliness and predictability necessary to properly plan to purchase trees and, when necessary, to contract with qualified contractors for planting related work. The Commission will discuss this with **AL** to determine how the process may be improved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul M. Bevilacqua, Secretary

Next meeting: Thursday May 8, 2014 at 7 PM

Location: Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library