

Newburyport Tree Commission

Minutes January 8, 2015

Newburyport Tree Commission

Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library

Meeting Convened at 7:00 PM.

Tree Commission (TC) Members present: Ed Taylor (Chair) (**ET**), Paul Bevilacqua (Secretary) (**PB**), Crispin Miller (**CM**), David Dylewski (**DD**), Byron Getchell (**BG**), Paul Harrington (Vice Chair and Treasurer) (**PH**), Sheila Taintor (**ST**), Wayne Amaral, Tree Warden and Director of the Department of Public Services, ex-officio (**WA**);

Report of the Secretary

The Minutes of the December 11 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Report of the Treasurer

The report was reviewed and discussed. **PH** noted that there was no change in the budget from the December report. Actions taken subsequently will be reported at the February meeting. The report was unanimously approved.

Tree Warden's Report

WA said that although he had stated at the December meeting that he would have a report for this meeting, he did not have a report as he is continuing familiarize himself with this role and the various related activities.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education:

ST reported on outreach to the public schools. She and **DD** have met with the AP environmental science class at the NHS and discussed both finding good sites for street trees and locating heritage trees in Newburyport. One student has taken on the heritage trees as her year-long stewardship project. **ST** and **DD** are developing a new presentation on invasives for students in grades 4, 5 & 6 at the River Valley Charter School. They will be doing last year's presentation on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) to the 7th graders at the Nock Middle School later this winter.

Planting and Pruning

DD led a multi-part report by members of the Sub-Committee.

Spring 2015 Planting

BG reported on the planting of trees for the Spring 2015. **BG** has assumed responsibility for this project. He noted that planning is on hold until the Commission receives notification that funds have been made available to purchase the trees.

Street Tree Inventory Management

CM reported that we have two Street Tree Inventories: one which covers all street trees in the City and is in the hands of the Tree Warden; and a second inventory of trees which have been planted by the Tree Committee and its successor the (TC) since 2006. He noted that he, **DD**, and J. Esche had visited and inventoried about 85% of the 580 or so of these trees planted since 2006. This inventory is 80% complete and contains photos, GPS and descriptions of the trees. The information has been loaded into a data base which is managed by Jeff Esche.

CM projected that the remaining trees would be inventoried by the end of February. **CM** thanked Jeff Esche for his support as the proprietor of the system and for entering all of the information.

Green Street Planting

PH, the Commissioner responsible for coordinating this project, reported, as in the past, that the **TC** is ready to move ahead. He reported on the preparation that has been completed and the ability of the **TC** to move forward immediately after the **DPS** makes a decision to move forward. The **DPS** has not been able to finalize plans and let contracts as they are working to secure additional funding. The project has become more costly than was anticipated, thus the delay. **WA** said that the timeline for cut outs for the tree wells, work on resurfacing the street, and replacement of the sidewalks cannot be set until specific plans and financing are finalized.

The **TC** expressed its unanimous frustration at the continued delay in the project. They will likely need to seek another extension for the extension of the **CPA** grants.

Pruning

DD announced that there would be one additional date for the annual pruning and mulching activities by Commission members. Potential dates are March 28, April 11, and the addition of April 25. **WA** recommitted to assisting in the process including arranging for the materials to be dumped at the **DPS** lot and to provide quality mulch. The **TC** will have access to the mulch pile stored at the **DPS**.

OLD BUSINESS

FY 15 Free Cash Proposal for Spring 2015 Planting

WA reported that proposal for funding from FY 15 free cash for Spring 2015 tree purchase and planting has not yet been submitted as all free cash proposals are on hold. Discussions have been placed on hold by the Mayor's Office. It is unclear when a decision will be made. If the delay extends much longer it is likely that it will be too late to purchase and plant trees in the Spring.

FY 16 Budget Proposal

The FY 16 budget proposal was approved unanimously at the December meeting for submission to **WA** for inclusion in the budget process. At that time the Commission asked that **PH** and **PB** develop a narrative overview for submission with the budget to provide context for the proposal, emphasizing the priorities of the **TC** and the benefits to the community. The importance of follow up tree care was reiterated as the Commission restated its position that it would only plant trees for which there is a financial commitment for care.

The **TC** will seek to arrange to present the budget proposal to the Mayor and/or her staff, along with copies to **WA** and Tony Furnari. The Commissioners believe that it is important, at least for these initial budgets, to be able to make the presentation and respond to questions which might arise.

Adopt-A-Tree Program

BG had described the Adopt-A-Tree Program currently in place in Peabody at the December meeting. The Commission found this proposal to be very interesting. The proposal was conceptually approved. **BG** will submit a more detailed proposal in advance of the February meeting to allow the **TC** to make a decision as to whether it would like to initiate such a program in Newburyport.

2015 Meeting Calendar Revision

The **TC** typically meets at least 10 times on the second Thursday of each month. Due to some scheduling conflicts for of some members it was agreed to meet on April 16 the third Thursday. **PB** will attempt to reserve the Children's Activity Room for that date.

NEW BUSINESS

Commission Meeting and Operational Guidelines

The **TC** unanimously agreed to the amended **Meeting and Operational Guidelines** presented by **PB**, consistent with the action taken at the December meeting.

Election of Officers

At the December **TC** meeting **ET** had notified the **TC** that he did not plan to stand for reelection as Chair. **CM** and **PH** were nominated and unanimously elected as Chair and Vice Chair. **PH** and **PB** agreed to continue as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

The Commissioners thanked and expressed their appreciation to **ET** for his tireless efforts in providing leadership for the Commission as Chair and as an active member.

CPA Grant

The **TC** voted unanimously to pursue a CPA grant to plant additional trees. **DD** agreed to lead the effort in developing the proposal. A proposal will be submitted to the Commission for

consideration at the February meeting unless it must be submitted to the CPC prior to that date. In that case the Chair will make the decision.

Purchase of Reflective Vests

The **TC** voted unanimously to appropriate whatever funds may be needed to purchase 12 reflective vests for Commissioners to use in carrying out their work on various projects and up to another 12 for the use of volunteers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul M. Bevilacqua, Secretary

Next meeting: Thursday February 12, 2015 at 7 PM

Location: Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library

DRAFT