

Newburyport Tree Commission

Minutes July 17, 2014

Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library

Meeting Convened at 7:03 PM.

Members present: E. Taylor (Chair) (**ET**), P. Bevilacqua (Secretary) (**PB**), S. Taintor (**ST**); A. Lafferty, Tree Warden and Deputy Director of the Department of Public Services, ex-officio (**AL**), D. Dylewski (**DD**), Byron Getchell (**BG**)

Absent: P. Harrington (Vice Chair and Treasurer) (**PH**), Crispin Miller (**CM**)

Report of the Secretary

The Minutes of the June 12 meeting were reviewed. After discussion as to whether to include a note regarding a comment by one member at the meeting, the comment was excluded on a vote of 4 in favor and 1 abstention **PB**. The Minutes were approved as revised.

Report of the Treasurer

The Treasurer submitted his report to the Commission via email prior to the meeting. He reported that there were no additional expenses or income since the June report. The only change is that the pending reimbursement of \$49.00 to **ET** for a conference reimbursement has been processed. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

- **BG** informed the Commission that the City of Newburyport has received a credit of \$960.00 at Northeast Nurseries as a settlement for the trees which had been damaged on High Street. These funds are the remainder of the credit after the replacement trees were purchased and planted. These type of funds do not generally appear on the DPS financial report used by the Treasurer for his report to the Commission. **AL** will make sure that they are included in the future. The specific amount received will be reported at the August meeting.

Tree Warden's Report

AL reported that there have been 20 removals since January 1, 2014. He explained that the final decisions relative to a tree removal are made by him, based upon a review individually, or in combination, by the designated Commission member **DD**, **AL**, and Tom Brann, the DPS tree specialist, who removes the trees which are scheduled by **AL** according to Tom's available time and resources. **AL** reported that he would distribute an update on the Tree Inventory.

AL reported that there have been 72 work orders completed this month. There are currently 37 open tree trimming work orders, 5 open removal work orders, 67 open stump removal work orders, and 50 open evaluate tree work orders.

AL reported that the Tree Inventory has been completed, and he will distribute a report on it once it is finalized.

AL was not able to provide the Commission with the monthly list of the proposed and completed removals as had been agreed at the May meeting. Hopefully it will be available for the Committee at the August 14 meeting.

- **FY 15 Budget Update**

It is unclear whether any FY 2015 funds have been allocated to the Tree Commission. Initially it appeared that no funds had been allocated. At the meeting **AL** reported that he was advised that some funds had been allocated by the Mayor. He was not sure of the amount or the purpose.

Sub-Committee Reports

- **Planting and Pruning**

DD confirmed that 25 trees will be planted on Green Street and that the necessary funds are available. However, **BG** has not been successful to date in finding the two species of elms, the Valley Forge American and the Allee Lacebark, for Green Street, but is continuing to contact growers. He is hoping to be able to purchase all 25 trees from one vendor in our region, since it will be more economical. If the trees are not available for this fall, the planting of Green Street will have to be delayed until early Spring 2015. The trees will be ordered as soon as possible to lock them in for Newburyport.

The 15 trees which will be planted in the Fall will be less difficult to locate for purchase, since the Commission has more flexibility in what tree to plant at the selected sites.

New Tree Requests

Mr. Richard Salus, of 45 Purchase Street attended. He requested that the Commission plant a tree in front of his residence and offered to pay to purchase the tree (but not for the other costs of planting and caring for them). He had previously requested that **DD**, Tree Commission member and arborist, consult with him relative to the proposed location for the tree. **DD** and member **BG** met with Mr. Salus, on site, and determined that his preferred location could not support a tree. However, they did identify three nearby locations along Purchase Street toward Lime Street which would require the hard surface to be cut away in order to plant there. These three locations will be added to the ongoing tree request list. At that time Dave explained that the list was long and there were no resources available to do the needed hard surface work. At tonight's meeting, Mr. Salus repeated his request. **AL** explained that the DPS was not cutting any tree pits anywhere in the City at the present time. The Tree Commission concluded that it could not, in good faith, specify a date when such planting could be accomplished.

- **Green Street Planting**

As noted, the Commission has received funds from the CPC to plant all 25 trees. **AL** anticipated that by the end of July the contractor will dig the pits for the trees to be planted on Green Street. There was discussion about the acquisition process and the quality and quantity of available trees. Due to the Commission's previous inability to commit to purchasing the trees in a timely manner trees could not be ordered and secured for delivery.

AL will obtain two bids for the 25 elm trees from Stratham Circle and Corliss Nurseries.

Once the pits have been dug **DD** and **BG** will do their best to locate the 25 trees needed for Green Street from a single vendor, hopefully regional, to insure quality, consistency and to reduce the cost. If they are not available, it is likely that the planting of Green Street will be delayed until early Spring 2015, and that the trees will be ordered immediately as the funds are now available.

- **Contracts for Tree Care for April-June/July-November**

At the April 10 meeting the Commission had voted unanimously to award the contract to Classic Companies. Classic Companies notified the Commission that it could not accept the contract. The Commission is in the process of trying to determine a way to have the 18 trees watered for the rest of the season. Jeff Eshe has volunteered to water the 15 transplanted trees.

- **Green Street Parking Lot**

AL pointed out that the 23 trees that the City planted in the Green Street parking lot are City trees. It is yet to be determined whether the Commission will assume responsibility for care of these trees once the contractor's responsibilities have been fulfilled.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on Tree Requests**

DD reported that there are 27 open requests for trees in areas where the area is appropriate to plan. There are less than 10 requests for trees in locations which have not yet been deemed to be appropriate.

- **Status of City Trees Planted by the Tree Commission in 2012**

DD reported that he had not yet completed this. It will hopefully be completed in time for the August meeting.

- **Status of 2013 Tree Nursery Trees**

ST reported that the Arbor Day Foundation will resend new trees in mid-April/early May 2015 to replace the trees planted in the Tree Nursery in April 2013 which had died. They will send 10 red maples, 2 Japanese zelkovas and 2 thornless honey locusts. (ADF has phone numbers for both & ST.)

NEW BUSINESS

- **Proposed Annual Calendar of Activities**

PH took the initiative to suggest annual calendar of activities. The proposal will be discussed at a future meeting as PH was not present to discuss his proposal.

- **Update: Benefit/Cost Analysis of Tree Commission Tree Nursery**

CM was not present to submit and discuss the analysis. This item will be placed on the August 14 agenda

- **Water wagon/pump-Tree watering**

The discussion focused upon the proposed shared use of the water wagon and related watering issues. It appears that the water wagon would not be appropriate for use on most of the Rail Trail. Several ideas were shared as to alternative vehicles which might be considered in the future for use by either the Parks Department and/or the Tree Commission.

There was consensus that regardless of what is decided about the water wagon, the Commission, as noted, must arrange to have the trees watered this year or they will likely die. If they do a substantial investment of time and money will be lost. Additionally, there needs to be a dependable long term solution to watering and tree care. There was no agreement on a solution, but the Commission will continue to work toward developing one.

- **Commission member to complete tree evaluations**

DD notified the Commission that after serving three years evaluating trees for the Commission, he no longer has the time to spend on that responsibility. He estimated that it involves 75-100 annually. The Commission thanked him for his service and the quality of work that he had done. **AL** thanked **DD** for doing a wonderful job and noted that it had been a pleasure working with him as part of a team effort

- **Resignation of Andrew Lafferty**

AL announced that he had notified the Mayor that he has accepted the position of Department of Public Works Director for the Town of Lynnfield. His resignation will be effective at the end of August, by which time the City hopes to have hired a person to fill his position. He said that it was a difficult decision to leave, but that Lynnfield provided an excellent opportunity for career advancement. The Commissioners unanimously agreed that Andrew had been a very good person to work with and that he brought a great deal of professionalism to his broad and complex responsibilities. He will be missed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul M. Bevilacqua, Secretary

Next meeting: Thursday August 14, 2014 at 7 PM

Location: Children's Activity Room, Newburyport Public Library