



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Annual Report FY 2019
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Mission

The mission of the Newburyport Tree Commission as stated in in the Newburyport Code of Ordinances: Chapter 12: Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article VI: Protection of Public Trees, Section 12-172 is to select, plant, protect, maintain, plan for and increase the health, beauty, quantity, diversity, and vitality of Newburyport trees.

Organization

The Tree Commission is a volunteer group whose members are appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Commission consists of seven (7) voting members, plus two (2) alternates, not including the Tree Warden or his designees who serve as ex-officio members of the Commission.

Responsibilities

Advise the Tree Warden and other City officials with respect to the adoption and amendment of plans, programs and regulations pertaining to the protection of Public Trees in the City, including the City Tree Plan and Tree Regulations;

Monitor the health and protection of Public Trees, creating and updating inventories of such trees;

Identify issues relative to the health and protection of Public Trees and recommending solutions to problems identified;

Advise the Tree Warden and other City officials with respect to the planting and replacement of Public Trees and on tree-related issues;

Seek grants and conducting fundraising to assist the Commission's mission, such funds to be deposited into the Tree Fund;

Promote knowledge and awareness of the benefits of trees and their impact on the quality of life in Newburyport;

Actively design, select, plant and maintain the tree ecology of Newburyport in coordination with the Tree Warden and the City Tree Plan.

FY 2019 Activities

In furtherance of this mission the Commission, through its monthly meetings and projects, planned and implemented several activities during the year, either alone or in collaboration with the Tree Warden. These projects/activities included:

- Purchased and planted 33 trees in the Fall and 57 in Spring 2019. They were planted in selected locations as part of the plan to replace the 120 trees in hazardous condition which were removed in this period throughout the City's neighborhoods. The locations were selected by the Tree Commission, in collaboration with the Tree Warden, upon review of City streets by Tree Commissioners, suggestions from the general public, and the work of several volunteers.
- Continued the implementation of a plan to raise supplementary funds for the purchase and care of trees in collaboration with other public, private, and nonprofit groups.
- As part of its effort to educate Newburyport residents and to encourage their help in caring for our newly planted trees, the Tree Commission drops off doorhangers at homes where new trees are planted explaining the tree bags and the watering procedure while asking residents to also water their tree(s). At the beginning of the third year, when the Tree Commission no longer waters the trees, another doorhanger is dropped off asking the resident to continue watering their tree for another year to guarantee its success. Many residents thanked the Commission profusely and said how much they love their tree.
- The Tree Commissioners, along with both community and professional volunteers, pruned, weeded, and mulched approximately 175 newly planted trees throughout the Community on April 27 and May 4.
- Worked with City schools in a variety of ways including the River Valley Charter School (RVCS). With the approval of the Tree Warden the Tree Commission supported the limited tapping of street maple trees as an educational project by 4-8 grade students. Additionally, it authorized the RVCS faculty's use of the Tree Inventory to plan educational activities.
- Provided on-going support for and advice to the Tree Warden relative to hazard trees, proposed tree action, and related issues, including developing a strategy to combat the inevitable Emerald Ash Borer infestation of City Ash trees. Secured funding to ensure that all City Ash trees are inoculated and have the best chance of survival and minimize public safety issues.
- Completed an inventory of City owned trees. Two paid interns worked 608 hours, and five volunteers worked 371 hours to inventory 11,246 trees. 5,856 of that number were street trees. The remaining trees are located in public areas, parks, schools and cemeteries.

- The Assistant Tree Warden actively uses the Inventory as a management tool. New trees are inventoried at planting and removed trees/trunks/stumps are noted in the system when action is taken. A system is in place to update existing trees on a 5-year basis.
- Emily Noonan, an inventory intern, and several volunteers created the 56-page *Guide to Newburyport Trees*. The book is a wonderful resource to help the reader identify street trees in Newburyport.
- Maintained, in collaboration with the Tree Warden, a Tree Plan including: Tree Regulations, A Guide for the Protection of Public Trees and the related Check List, the Tree Inventory Data Elements, and lists of both Acceptable (“approved”) and Unacceptable (“prohibited”) Trees for planting street trees in Newburyport.
- Provided seasonal watering and care for over 246 street trees July-September 2018 and 232 were watered May-June 2019. The trees were planted between Fall 2016 and Spring 2018.
- An expenditure of \$815 was made to purchase additional/replacement watering bags.
- Requested and received funds from several sources:
 - City of Newburyport Trusts: Bromfield Fund, \$12,000 and Cutter Fund, \$6,000;
 - Institution for Savings, \$650 for a Recognition Tree leaf;
 - Newburyport Bank, \$650 for a Recognition Tree leaf;
 - Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (MA DCR), \$13,000 matching grant for the City Tree Inventory;
 - Community Preservation Committee, \$35,800 for High Street trees.
- Received Tree City and Tree Growth Awards from the Arbor Day Foundation and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (MA DCR).
- Continued to actively seek increased support for the Adopt-a-Tree and Memorial Tree Programs and other related projects in public/private partnerships with the non-profit Friends of Newburyport Trees (FoNT).
- Initiated planning for two major, long term projects with the goal of planting a large number of trees supported by funds raised from various private and public sources.
 - Two trees have been planted, to date, at the *Gateway II Project* located at the Merrimac Street/Chain Bridge roundabout. When additional funds are available this project will be continued, cognizant of safety at the roundabout.
 - The *High Street Project* has been the Commission’s largest undertaking with a total of 121 trees planted to date. 75 of these were planted in 2018. This is an on-going project with an additional 45 sites planned which extend from Atkinson Commons to the Newbury town line.

- On June 23 FoNT and the Tree Commission sponsored a table to help celebrate the Open Streets event in the South End. The FoNT members distributed tree information as well as sponsoring tree-oriented learning games. A large number of people stopped by the table. A number participated in the 10-tree scavenger hunt and more enjoyed the trivia questions. 6 Tree Guides were sold and many leaf lollipops were given out. Many passersby complimented the Commission for its efforts to increase Newburyport's urban canopy.
- Commissioners Cris Miller and Connie Preston appeared on Joe DiBiase's radio program, The Local Pulse, describing the work of the Commission and discussing city trees.
- In February 2018 the Newburyport Tree Commission initiated a series of informational presentations by guest speakers entitled "Shady News Talks". The occasional Talks are presented at the beginning of the monthly Tree Commission meetings to educate Commissioners and interested citizens about matters related to trees and our canopy. During FY 2019, the Commission heard from the Chair of the Planning Board, a representative from National Grid, the leader of the Parks Commission for the Bartlet Mall, and a representative from a company which sells structural soil.

Summary

As in the past, the Tree Commissioners are committed to continuing their volunteer efforts to meet their assigned mission and responsibilities and to build upon their accomplishments to date. The Commissioners would welcome an opportunity to meet with appropriate officials to discuss the work of the Commission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Newburyport Tree Commission

Constance Preston, Chair

Crispin Miller, Vice Chair and Treasurer

Sheila Taintor, Secretary

Paul Bevilacqua

Jane Niebling

David Dylewski

Scott Hanley

Paul Harrington, Alternate

Kate Harried, Alternate

Jamie Tuccolo, Tree Warden, ex officio

Lance Rickard, Assistant Tree Warden & Tree Warden Designee, ex officio