

Newburyport Tree Commission Annual Report FY 2021

July 1, 2020 - June 03, 2021

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.

Fiscal Year 2021 Activities:

In furtherance of this mission the Commission held meetings, conducted projects, planned and implemented activities during the year, either alone or in collaboration with the Tree Warden and Assistant Tree Warden/City Arborist.

- Due to the pandemic, the Tree Commission was not allocated any funds in FY 2021 and therefore was limited in its capacity to plant trees. The Commission persevered and planted as many trees as possible utilizing funds received from various grants, CPA funds and funds received from PCI Synthesis due to an EPA violation.
- Purchased and planted 18 trees in Fall 2020 utilizing funds received from CPA as well as grants from the Bromfield and Merrill trusts.
- Purchased and planted 74 trees in Spring 2021 utilizing funds received from PCI Synthesis as well as a limited allocation from DPS. This also included a collaboration with the Planning Office to plant and maintain 6 trees along the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project on High St. All costs for those 6 trees were funded by the Planning Office.
- All trees were planted in selected locations as part of the plan to replace the 91 trees which were removed in this period throughout the City's neighborhoods. The locations were selected by the Tree Commission in collaboration with the Assistant Tree Warden/City Arborist and suggestions from the general public.
- Watered and maintained tree pits for 214 trees in Summer 2020 and 201 trees in Spring 2021.
- Provided on-going support for and advice to the Assistant Tree Warden relative to hazard trees, proposed tree action, and related issues.
- The Assistant Tree Warden actively uses the Tree Inventory developed by the Tree Commission 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.
- Provided on-going support and advice to the Planning Office regarding street trees as they relate to development projects.
- Maintained, in collaboration with the Tree Warden, a Tree Plan including: Tree Regulations, A Guide for the Protection of Public Trees and the related Checklist, the Tree Inventory Data Elements, and lists of both Acceptable ("approved") and Unacceptable ("prohibited") Trees for planting street trees in Newburyport.
- The Tree Commission's Annual Spring Pruning and Mulching event was held May 22nd with 9 Tree Commissioners and community volunteers participating. See the photo [here](#). A smaller group of volunteers also went out on June 5th and we hope to send more smaller groups out throughout the summer.

- Continued to actively seek increased support for the Adopt-a-Tree Program (40 to date) and other related projects in public/private partnerships with the non-profit Friends of Newburyport Trees (FoNT).
- Worked with residents of Spring St, Jack Santos and Keith Eddings, on a project to advance the canopy on the street. We mapped out available planting sites on the street, developed a letter to residents about the project and solicited \$2,500 to pay to purchase new trees for the Fall 2021 planting.
- Received Tree City Award designation from the Arbor Day Foundation and Mass DCR.
- The 56-page Guide to Newburyport Trees, first published in FY 2019, is in its 5th printing and continues to generate revenue for the Tree Commission.
- Due to the pandemic, Friends of Newburyport Trees (FoNT) and the Tree Commission were unable to celebrate Arbor Day for the second year in a row.
- Because of the new challenges which teachers faced on a daily basis caused by the pandemic, fifth grade teachers were unable to participate in the 2021 MA DCR Annual Poster Day Contest this year. They are looking forward to participating next year with the return to normal conditions.

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 in spite of the current difficulties imposed by the pandemic. The Commissioners welcome an opportunity to meet with appropriate officials to discuss our work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Newburyport Tree Commission

Constance Preston, Chair & Treasurer

Sheila Taintor, Vice Chair & Secretary

Paul Bevilacqua

Sue Brown

Scott Hanley

Andrew Soracco

Paul Harrington, Alternate

Jamie Tuccolo, Tree Warden, ex officio

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