



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2023

The meeting convened at 6:40 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Paul Knowlton (Chair), Paul Harrington (Financial Secretary), Marcia Edson (Secretary), Stephanie Pellegrini, Marilyn Cohodas, Becky MacKnight (Alternate)

Tree Warden: Mike Hennessey

Absent: Bob Uhlig (Vice-Chair), Scott Hanley, Jean Berger

Public comment

No public comment

Tree Warden report

Mike reported that the Forestry Crew had removed three high hazard trees on lower Atkinson Common, 15 Olive St. and 6 Johnson St. He investigated a Tree Violation query on Cherry St. and confirmed the trees in question were not on city property. He shared information about two requests for tree removals at 35-37 Kent St. and 11 Ocean St. These requests will be evaluated using the new Tree Commission Criteria for Tree Removal Request. There has been timely progress on Forestry Crew work orders.

Secretary's report

Motion by Marilyn to approve minutes of the November 9, 2023, meeting, seconded by Steph. Minutes approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report

Paul H. shared the detailed year-to-date financial report. He pointed out that the trust fund accounts are difficult to manage because funds are also allotted for sidewalks, so the allocations vary. He will continue to meet with Ethan Manning to review finances.

Spring 2024 planting

Paul H. shared the updated spreadsheet for Spring 2024 plantings, and he opened a discussion about the 60 tree placements for the spring, which include the trees donated by Jim McCarthy. Commissioners should review the spreadsheet and add additional sites. Paul K. stated that he continues to have positive responses from residents he has approached tree donations. Becky will

speak with the residents of 8 and 10 Adams St. and 1 Upland St. about possible donations. Mike asked who chooses the species. Paul K. responded that the resident could suggest a species from the city's recommended tree list and the Tree Commission will consider the resident's choice in conjunction with the commission's recommendation based on the space, proximity of utilities and wires.

Social Media update

Marilyn will check to see if the newspaper article on the Butler St. plantings has been tweeted. She suggested posting a PDF of the article.

FoNT report

FoNT did not meet, so there was no report.

Tree Inventory

Mike helped direct the discussion about the purpose of the Tree Inventory: What is it we need to know from the Tree Inventory? What will be done with the information from the Tree Inventory? Paul K. spoke of the importance of a 5yr. check on plantings to determine what species flourished and trees that were not healthy.

Outreach

Paul reported that Jane Neibling is collaborating with the high school to develop an opportunity for Newburyport high school students to eventually assist with tree inventory.

New Business

Election of officers - Paul K. shared the process for election of officers. Steph will reach out to members for nominations. A vote will be taken at the January 11th meeting.

Old Business

Review of Criteria for Tree Removal Request - Commissioners discussed the draft document and made several changes. Marcia will revise the document to reflect the commissioners' suggestions. The Criteria will be piloted for a 6 month period and then reviewed by the Commission. Mike clarified the process and how he will use his professional expertise along with the criteria to evaluate requests for Tree Removals. Paul H. moved that the Tree Commission pilot the Criteria for Tree Removal Request document, seconded by Steph, unanimous vote to accept.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Marilyn, seconded by Paul H. Unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, January 11, 2024, in the Program Room of the Library.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Edson, Secretary