



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 8, 2022, 6:00 pm

The meeting convened at 6:05 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Sheila Taintor (Chair), Paul Knowlton (Vice-Chair), Marcia Edson (Secretary), Marilyn Cohodas, Paul Harrington (Alternate)

Absent: Scott Hanley, Jamie Tuccolo (Tree Warden, ex-officio)

Reports

Tree Warden

Due to the Tree Warden's absence, there was no report.

The next day, Jamie Tuccolo emailed the Commission that the sidewalk on State Street heading up to High Street is being replaced. He is adding four new tree pits and wants the Commission to plant trees there this fall.

Secretary

The minutes of the August 11, 2022, meeting were approved unanimously as amended. Paul Harrington moved to accept; Paul Knowlton seconded.

Treasurer

The trees have been watered 14 times, with just one additional watering remaining. Sheila explained that the \$24,435 budgeted for watering will not be enough to cover extended watering should the drought continue. She suggested the Commission may want to plan for more than 15 waterings next summer. Members spoke in favor of extending waterings this fall. Paul Harrington made a motion to extend waterings up to a total of 20 weeks if conditions demand such. Second by Marcia, vote was unanimous.

Additional monies can be requested from FoNT but will have to be approved by the City Council.

Sheila explained that National Grid is buying 20 large trees for planting this fall. The cost for those trees does not appear in the budget because no money is involved, but the trees will be planted this fall.

Paul K. asked if the overdue invoices have been paid. Sheila reported that 2 have been paid and she has not heard about 2 more. Sheila spoke with the Finance Director's Office about the process and has asked Jen Sullivan about how the invoices are handled, but the timing is still unclear. Sheila sends a PDF authorizing payment for the invoice to DPS on the day she receives it, but it's unclear why the payment is not happening in a timely manner.

Fall 2022 Planting

We are currently finalizing the list of addresses/species for the fall planting. Two trees will be planted on the rail trail by the board of FoNT. Holes for two other trees, destined for the corner of Low and Toppans Lane, will be dug this fall, but the trees will be planted in the spring.

Paul K. asked about siting trees on Lime St, adjacent to the Brown School parking lot. He will check into placement and provide siting information for fall planting.

Paul H. and Sheila both mentioned the importance of having amply sized tree pits to support the health of the trees. Sheila will check with Jamie about the Tree Commission marking the actual pit size before DPS digs them.

Collecting bags – This summer 181 trees were watered, and we need to collect the bags for storage at the DPS shed over the winter. Paul H. explained the process and because of the mess involved, he was not comfortable asking for volunteers to assist. After some discussion, Paul H. suggested that if the price was acceptable, perhaps Coastal could collect the bags and leave them at DPS. Sheila pointed out that this would be efficient, but it would eliminate a check on the condition of the trees. Paul H. will get an estimate for removing bags from Coastal and report back at our next meeting.

Tree Commission meeting schedule

Marcia reported that the DPS conference room is not available, and the library has not yet opened the Program Room for outside meetings. She will look into the other suggestions that were offered: Police Department, Mayor's conference room and the Institution for Savings, Garrison Inn.

Community Outreach

Sheila was contacted by a Triton student interested in doing an internship with the Tree Commission. Sheila met with the Career Counselor at Newburyport High also. There is plenty of interest, but we need to come up with a specific project before taking on a student. Sheila asked that everyone think about this and come to next month's meeting with some ideas or projects for a student intern.

Motion to adjourn made by Paul H., seconded by Marilyn, vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marcia Edson, Secretary