



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 10, 2022, 6:00 pm

The meeting convened at 6:00 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Sheila Taintor (Chair and Secretary), Sue Brown, Marcia Edson, Scott Hanley, Paul Knowlton, Paul Harrington (alternate)

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

Public in attendance: Crispin Miller and Stephanie Pellegrini representing FoNT
Carly Soare, 11 Oak St., Newburyport
Jane Niebling, Cantemus

Shady News Talk #2

6:00-6:30 Speakers: Cris Miller, Stephanie Pellegrini, members of FoNT

Topic: A Conversation with FoNT

Cris provided a brief history of FoNT from 2004 to the present. The 501(c)(3) organization was established in 2004 with the initial purpose of setting up a conservation easement. It was reactivated in 2014 to raise funds and to allow for tax deductible donations. The current focus of the organization is fund raising to assist the Tree Commission in purchasing new trees. Chris shared examples of the organization's work including an inventory of city trees and the publication of A Guide to Newburyport Trees.

Steph reported on the fund-raising success of the FoNT sculpture on the Clipper City Rail Trail for donor recognition. It was installed in 2018 and there are plans for installation of a second sculpture along with new plantings to be completed this spring. FoNT is presenting an Arbor Day talk in conjunction with the Newburyport Public Library.

Reports

Secretary

The Commission approved the Minutes of the February 10, 2022 meeting.
Paul Harrington moved to approve, Sue Brown seconded, unanimous vote.

Treasurer

Since there were no financial actions since the last meeting, no report was submitted.

Tree Warden report

As the Tree Warden was absent, there was no update.

Public Comment

Carly Soare, 11 Oak St.

Ms. Soare was seeking information on the policy for removal of street trees. Her concern was related to recent DPS activity in her neighborhood. In the discussion that followed, questions arose about tree removal issues including: if and how abutters are notified when a tree is to be taken down, criteria for removing a tree, procedure for halting tree removal. Sue Brown spoke to the legitimate reasons for taking trees down such as safety, and she stressed the importance of replacing those trees and adding trees to other city sites such as the successful plantings along Low St. abutting the school department's Bradley Field.

Arbor Day Proclamation Invitation – Jane Niebling, Cantemus Chamber Chorus

Jane explained that the reading of the Arbor Day Proclamation by the Mayor is a requirement for the Tree City annual recognition award. She suggested that the Tree Commission consider inviting the Mayor to read the Proclamation before the Cantemus Chamber Chorus concert of Paul Winters's Missa Gaia, a celebration of Mother Earth, at the Belleville Congregational Church on May 1, 2022. Cantemos will be performing with Paul Winter himself and the Paul Winter Consort, and the Newburyport Children's Chorus. Other environmental groups (MRWC, IRWA, etc.) have been invited to participate, so it would be an opportunity to spread the word about the work of the Tree Commission. After a brief discussion, Marcia Edson moved that the Tree Commission ask Mayor Reardon to read the Arbor Day Proclamation at the Cantemus concert. Seconded by Sue Brown. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Spring planting 2022

Sheila confirmed that there are thirty confirmed spots with an allowance for five additional trees. Paul Harrington reported that purchase orders for the specific species should go out soon. Unit pricing has been requested for each job for 30-35 trees: planting, mulching, and placing the bags. If enough volunteers are available, then the only charge will be for planting. Scott and other members agreed they would be available to bag and mulch.

Sheila mentioned that we should be more strategic about where trees are planted. She suggested we pair up in teams to review streets for additional plantings. Paul Knowlton and Sue Brown will explore the streets West of Bromfield St. Sheila and Marcia Edson will do the streets East of Bromfield.

Education

2022 DCR Arbor Day Poster Contest

Marcia and Sheila viewed the fifteen finalists' entries at the Molin. Sheila shared photos of the 15 finalist posters and explained the timetable for the poster contest. Following the school vote, the school winner will be announced on Monday and that poster sent to MADCR.

NHS College & Career Center Internship & Career Fair, April 13, 2022

Sheila will attend to learn more about a possible internship opportunity for a student with the Tree Commission.

Integrating Tree Plantings with DPS

Timely use of resources for street/sidewalk renewal and tree planting

Sheila shared photos of trees planted in bump outs that were constructed on Merrill St. at the same time the street and sidewalks were replaced, 5 years ago. The trees are thriving, and Sheila was told by residents that there were no problems with the plows. Another photo of a large oak tree on Oak St. showed the effectiveness of a similar bump out constructed when new sidewalks were installed. The new bump out provides a healthier environment for this very old tree. There was agreement that this kind of collaboration, integrating street/sidewalk renewal and tree planting seems to be a worthy model to foster.

Community Outreach

Filling Tree Commission Vacancies

Sheila will be talking with Mayor Reardon. The Mayor's Office and the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce will mention openings in their next email blast.

Carly Soare inquired about the process involved. Marcia explained how she attended a few meetings, met with the Chair and Vice-Chair and at their request submitted a letter of interest and resume to the Mayor, then the Mayor submitted the appointment to the City Council for two readings.

Twitter account

Paul Knowlton and Carly will work on gathering appropriate images and getting the Twitter account up and running.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Edson

Next meeting: Thursday, April 14, 2020 at 6:00 pm