



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023

The meeting convened at 6:30 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Paul Knowlton (Chair), Bob Uhlig (Vice-Chair), Marcia Edson (Secretary), Paul Harrington (Financial Secretary, Alternate), Stephanie Pellegrini, Becky MacKnight (Alternate), Scott Hanley, Marilyn Cohodas, Jean Berger

Absent: Jenn Sullivan (Acting Deputy DPS Director)

Agenda additions:

- Paul K. reported on his meeting with Jenn Sullivan, acting Deputy DPS director and Ron. Topics under discussion included the addition of tree pits on streets that are under construction, complaints regarding the trees taken down at the Senior Center, and “Dollar for Trees” promotion.
- Paul introduced Daniel Keating from DPS who explained this potential funding source for the Tree Commission. Daniel will be working on the details, in particular where the monies would be deposited to assure TC access and will keep the commission informed.
- Review of letter to the mayor: Members discussed the draft of the Tree Commission letter laying out recommendations and the rationale supporting those recommendations for future Tree Commission endeavors.

Public comment:

Mary Dehai, 33 Elmira Ave, Newburyport. Mary shared photos of several trees that had all limbs removed from what looked to be healthy trees on Chestnut St., Cushing St. and at the corner of Cushing and Hardy. She asked about the process for tree removal in the city, specifically when residents are notified and how a resident could be involved with the decision-making process before a tree is removed. Jean explained that the DPS must remove any trees that are considered a danger. Paul K agreed that we need better communication from the DPS and there needs to be a clear process that makes sense for the DPS, the resident, and the Tree Commission. Once this new DPS director begins his job, this is something that should be addressed by the Tree Commission. Mary thanked the commissioners for their input.

Tree Warden report: No report

Secretary's report:

Motion by Paul H, seconded by Jean to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2023, meeting. Minutes approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report:

Paul H. presented the year-to-date financial report. He pointed out that the \$20,000 DPS Operating budget will be spent by June 30 and that an additional \$9,000 request from FoNT is listed under the Donation Fund. Two additional contributions from FoNT \$6,500 in Oct. 2023 and \$6,500 in March 2024 will be needed to cover expenses for fiscal year 2024.

FoNT report:

Steph will continue to look into the process for including the Tree Commission link on the FoNT website page.

Paul K. initiated a discussion on the current levels for Tree Donations to FoNT. The *Get a Tree* document lists requested donations for \$250 and \$750. Paul K. suggested adding a lower amount which would reflect the cost of the tree but would not cover watering. Bob suggested that level donation might include a gator bag and information for the resident that explains the expectation that that resident would be responsible for watering. Paul K. would like a clearer description of each donation level on the *Get a Tree* document. The Tree Commission will continue to discuss and refine that document to provide better options for residents and clearer information.

Arbor Day Celebration:

Jean shared the Arbor Day *Tree Talk* handout and invited Tree Commission members to meet at the Y on Saturday, April 22. Jean and 3 other arborists will provide pruning demonstrations, and Mayor Reardon will read the Arbor Day Proclamation. Volunteers will prune trees on High and Merrimac Streets for the rest of the day.

Spring planting 2023:

A total of 28 trees are slated for planting. This includes 1 tree that FoNT will plant with volunteers and 2 trees we will plant purchased by National Grid. Paul H. added that the new trees measure 2- 2 ½ calipers, an upgrade from previous orders. Paul K stated that Digsafe will be done by Daniel and 8 new pits will be dug by Ron.

Spring 2023 Tree Inventory Update:

Paul K. has been in contact with Steve Lopez to provide access to MiMap for all members. Last fall Paul H. input trees that were planted in fall 2023, but now the photos and measurements need to be input. Becky will work with Paul K. to complete the inventory.

Community Outreach:

Marilyn reported that the TC Twitter account has 80 followers. She urged members to send her photos and information to post.

Action Items for next meeting:

- Include Tree Commission link on FoNT website.
- Query Andrew Levine about Tree Commission access to city's Google drive folders – Jean
- Revisit and refine *Get a Tree* document.
- MiMap access

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:00 PM by Scott Hanley, seconded by Paul H. Unanimous.

Next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, May 11, 2023, in the Program Room of the Library.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marcia Edson, Secretary

