



City of Newburyport Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2023

The meeting convened at 6:40 pm.

Tree Commission members present: Paul Knowlton (Chair), Bob Uhlig (Vice-Chair), Marcia Edson (Secretary), Marilyn Cohodas, Stephanie Pellegrini, Jean Berger,

Absent: Paul Harrington (Financial Secretary), Becky MacKnight (Alternate), Scott Hanley

Parks Manager: Mike Hennessey

Agenda additions:

- Clarification of Tree Commission responsibility for a tree located in a yard on Toppans Lane under construction. Mike expressed his concern over a large red oak that has had no protection during the construction around it. Jean explained that since this tree is on the other side of the sidewalk, it is not considered a street tree, so it does not fall under the purview of the Tree Commission.
- Crossing guard parking space at the corner of Low St. and Toppans Lane – Marcia outlined a request from Sheila Taintor to follow up on her meeting with Superintendent Sean Gallagher, in which they discussed how to protect the new trees that are next to the parking space. Mike reported that he had spoken to the residents of the Low St. property, and they too were concerned about the trees. Marcia offered to call the Superintendent. Steph suggested members keep an eye on the space to make sure the trees were not in danger. Paul K. will contact the residents.

Public comment:

- Paula Totvin, 1 Highlawn Terrace, Steve Riggins, 3 Highlawn Terrace, Paula spoke of her concern for needless removal of trees next to her property and shared photos of the area. The trees appear healthy and provide much needed shade. She would not object to some pruning but does not want the trees removed. Steve explained that 2 years ago several trees were ruined when the city removed major limbs and several trees, leaving what he described as a “hack job”. He was also concerned about the possible removal of the remaining trees, thus eliminating shade cover, to make way for the planting of new trees which will take at least 20 years to grow into the size of the current trees. Mike explained that the Norway maples are not good city trees, and they will be replaced with oaks planted in an alley. Paul K. stated he had visited the site and understands the residents’

frustration. His recommendation was to leave the Norway Maples that remain and begin to plant the more appropriate oaks over the next 5 years. Mike agreed that DPS would do that and in the meantime, clear out the brush and chokecherries that are in that spot. He urged Paula and Steve to reach out to DPS with questions and observations to keep the communication going. Paula and Steve agreed that would be an acceptable compromise.

Tree Warden report: No report.

Secretary's report:

Motion by Jean to approve minutes of the June 8, 2023, meeting, seconded by Marilyn. Minutes approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report:

Paul K. suggested we defer discussion of Paul H.'s report until Paul H. was present.

Social Media update:

Paul K. brought up the successful round of donations that are funding many of the fall plantings this year. Getting this information out to the public seems like an important task for the Tree Commission. There was discussion about the various platforms to use. Steph mentioned that the city uses Instagram and Facebook. She will reach out to find out how we could align Tree Commission postings with the city accounts.

FoNT report:

Steph reported that FoNT has discussed raising the donation to better reflect the actual costs involved with the purchase and care of a tree: \$850 for the Dedicate-a-Tree choice. The \$560 Site Specific choice and \$250 Adopt-a-tree choice would remain the same.

Fall Planting 2023:

- Paul K. expects that the planting of 58 trees will occur during the first 2-3 weeks of September. He will visit Bigelow, while Marcia and Jean will go to Northeast Nurseries to assess the new trees.

- Paul K reported that all the payments from the Butler St. residents have been received. A total of 10 trees will be planted.
- Mike asked about the vendors used by the Tree Commission. He will talk with Paul H. about considering wholesale vendors that the Parks Dept use.
- 113 Water St, area off the sidewalk, along entrance to sewer plant offices – Paul K. had spoken to the resident there who was eager for a tree. After some discussion, it was decided that a single trunk river birch would be a healthy species for that spot.
- Bob mentioned the Tree Tags used in Cambridge to alert residents to newly planted trees. He suggested they might be worth considering and will bring a sample to the next meeting. Mike mentioned considering QR codes like those used on the signage for the new Atkinson Common Tree Walk.

New business

Action Items for next meeting:

- Bob will look into the regulation process and guidelines for protecting city trees and Tree Tag samples from Cambridge.
- Steph will investigate how we can link up to the city's Instagram and Facebook accounts.
- Mike will gather information on the QR codes used in Atkinson Common signage.
- Jean will contact Jane Neibling about writing a piece for the Daily News on the Butler St. plantings.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM by Marilyn, seconded by Steph. Unanimous.

Next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, September 14, 2023, in the Program Room of the Library.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marcia Edson, Secretary

