

CITY OF NEWPORT TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Annual Report 2022

ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT ARE AGENDAS AND MINUTES FROM COMMISSION MEETINGS THROUGHOUT 2022. BELOW ARE HIGHLIGHTS BY MONTH

1. January 2022

At the first meeting of the new year the Commission discussed the need to support a tree equity tool that will help compile data on heat, cooling, and tree canopy throughout the city. Areas who are losing tree canopy will be targeted with free and reduced tree plantings. Education and community involvement will accelerate to support a more vital eco-system which is necessary for the health of residents and the community.

Initial review of the Pell Bridge realignment began with the Commission working with RIDOT to ensure robust, appropriate, and sustainable planting for the newly constructed areas. RIDOT has agreed to work with the Commission on the landscape plan. The Bike Path will also be reviewed and reports at this meeting confirmed the work had begun at Poplar Street.

2. February 2022

Discussions of archaeological pursuits have been reviewed by the Commission. While it is important to seek and document the history of our past residents and the city the Commission voted that it was not in the best interest of the parks or the current residents to allow any excavations that are not employing the most relevant professional standard for archaeological data archives for the guidance, creation, compilation, transfer and depositing of a site and its' artifacts.

3. March 2022

The Commission continues to push for the maintenance and upgrade to existing parks in the city. During the year they took a site visit to Kingston Playground and supported the need for new equipment, safety improvement and fencing. A grant was required for these actions and one was obtained and approved – leading to the upgrade and enhancement of the Kingston playground.

4. April 2022

Arbor Day in Newport was organized by the Commission in partnership with the Newport Tree Conservancy and celebrated at the Pell School. Trees were planted to honor 2 beloved teachers who had passed on. Family, friends, and students helped in the plantings.

5. May 2022

In keeping with the Tree, Park and Open Space Master Plan the Commission continues to lead in reclaiming and activating public open spaces. The Commission in its Advisory capacity advocated for the reclaiming of the Walnut and Chestnut Street rights-of-way to become parking free so as to enable residents and visitors free and open access to the harbor in these two spots.

6. June 2022

In early June the Commission hosted a public workshop to identify and recommend actions to ensure that parks were safe and open to all. The result of the workshop was the Newport Park Safety Report which was presented to the Commission and approved. The report tackled issues such as fires in parks, lighting, park use rules, homeless issues and more. After the report was accepted, it was submitted to the Mayor and Council for review and vote to accept the finding.

7. July 2022

RIDEM had provided a grant for the city to install a basketball court in the North End – supported by the Tree, Park and Open Space Master Plan. Conflict had arisen on the location due to multiple issues around the little league field and proposed skatepark. The city leadership stepped forward and found a new location in the North End for the basketball court. The Commission voted to change the location and contact RIDEM to secure permission that the grant would stay intact with the change of location. This new outdoor facility is greatly needed in the community.

8. August 2022

Due to vacations and conflicts, the Commission did not hold a meeting in August. Urgent matters are handled via email. There were no matters that arose.

9. September 2022

The Newport Historic Spring Park Leadership appeared once more before the Commission as they were nearing their fundraising goal. The Chair of the group brought both the update and the final plans for the park. Commission members were happy to see that the park was nearing the milestone of construction starting in October and that they were looking forward to watching the process of a new park honoring a historic site was created.

10. October 2021

The Friends of the Newport Skatepark came to their final meeting of the Commission to inform it of their upcoming appearance at the City Council meeting where they would request to move forward at a new site. They had worked diligently with the Commission through the process and members of both groups were pleased to see this project move to the next step.

Leadership from the Middle Passage Marker Project spoke about their next steps and asked if they could present their concept to the Commission at the November meeting.

11. November 2022

The Middle Passage Marker project presented their current plans for the memorial they wish to erect in Liberty Square. Much discussion took place between their architect, Commission members and the public. The group will be coming back later as they continue to work on their concept and reflect on some of the design and construction issues discussed.

12. December 2022

No meeting due to holiday season.

Attendance

January 25, 2022

Scott Wheeler, Elizabeth Fuerte, Rob Currier, Maureen Cronin, Bristow Dennis Bristow, Lauren Parmelee, Jean Frisbie, Karen DeCamillo

February 22, 2022

Rob Currier, Dennis Bristow, Maureen Cronin, Scott Wheeler; Stephanie Szneke, Kara DiCamillo, Lauren Parmelee, Jean Frisbee, Elizabeth Fuerte

March 30, 2022

Stephanie Szneke, Maureen Cronin, Scott Wheeler, Lauren Parmelee, Dennis Bristow, Rob Currier

April 26, 2022

Jean Frisbee, Scott Wheeler, Dennis Bristow, Denis Demers, Rob Currier, Maureen Cronin

May 4, 2022

Scott Wheeler, Maureen Cronin, Rob Currier, Dennis Bristow, Denis Demers, Stephanie Szneke, Jean Frisbee

June 29, 2022

Stephanie Szneke, Dennis Bristow, Scott Wheeler, Maureen Cronin, Stephanie Smyth, Dennis Demers, Kara DiCamillo

September 2, 2022

Maureen Cronin, Rob Currier, Stephanie Szneke, Scott Wheeler, Denis Bristow, Stephanie Smyth

October 25, 2022

Maureen Cronin, Dennis Bristow, Scott Wheeler, Lauren Parmelee, Stephanie Smyth, Rob Currier

November 29, 2022

Scott Wheeler, Jean Frisbee, Kara DiCamillo, Dennis Bristow, Rob Currier, Lauren Parmelee, Stephanie Szneke, Maureen Cronin, Stephanie Smythe, Denis Demers

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Location:

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD REMOTELY IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNOR MCKEE'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 22-01 " *SUCH MEANS MAY INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION, PROVIDING PUBLIC ACCESS THROUGH TELEPHONE, INTERNET, OR SATELLITE ENABLED AUDIO OR VIDEO CONFERENCING OR ANY OTHER TECHNOLOGY THAT ENABLES THE PUBLIC TO CLEARLY FOLLOW THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC BODY WHILE THOSE ACTIVITIES ARE OCCURRING*" . **IN THE EVENT GOVERNOR MCKEE'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2022, EXPIRES, THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT CITY HALL, 43 BROADWAY, CONFERENCE ROOM LEVEL 2, NEWPORT, RI 02840**

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89877084415>

Meeting ID: 898 7708 4415

Dial Toll Free

888 788 0099

833 548 0276

MINUTES REVIEW

PRESENTATIONS

Jim Egan – *Proposed OSL dating and sediment sampling at Newport Tower in Touro Park*

Lois Vaughn -- *Discussion of Tree Removal and Pruning Process – attachment provided*

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Freebody Sports lighting

Ballard Park

Pine St Drift Way

Cemetery updates

RIDOT Bridge realignment tree removals

Kingston Playground

Miantonomi Projects

Kingston Playground

Cliff Walk Management Plan

Abruzzi RIDEM Grant

AGENDA

TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Location: Zoom Call

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89877084415>

Meeting ID: 898 7708 4415

Dial Toll Free

888 788 0099

833 548 0276

FORESTRY

Fall Tree planting update / Arbor Day

Spring Planting plans:

City Forestry staffing

Common Burial Ground Cherry trees

REVIEW

Pell Phase 1 & 2 plans – review and questions

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Abruzzi Basketball RIDEM Grant

Almy Pond RIB Grant

Kingston Playground

Pine Street Drift Way

Ballard Park

Vanderbilt Fountain

Miantonomi Park

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Newport City Hall

43 Broadway

2nd floor Conference Room

MINUTES REVIEW – March 2022

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Arbor Day update

Spring Tree Planting update

Pine St Drift Way grant application

Sprouting Rock Improvements

Rochambeau / Washington Historic Trail 250th anniversary preparation

Updating of Historic Interpretive panels

Memorial Bench program

Kingston Playground

POSTED APRIL 22, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Newport City Hall

43 Broadway

2nd floor Conference Room

MINUTES REVIEW – February 2022

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

RIOT Landscaping

Landscape Ordinance – member research update

Spring Tree Planting:

Sprouting Rock Drive

Freebody Sports Lighting

Kingston Playground

Miantonomi reforestation project

Commemorative Bench Program

POSTED MARCH 25, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Newport City Hall

43 Broadway

2nd floor Conference Room

MINUTES REVIEW – April 2022

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Park Safety Workshop – rescheduled June 8

Kingston Playground

Abruzzi RIDEM Grant

Sprouting Rock Drive grant

Pine Street Drift way grant

Proposed Ordinance first reading May 25

POSTED MAY 20, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

6:00 – 7: 30pm

Newport Public Library

300 Spring Street

Program Room

MINUTES REVIEW – May 2022

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

1. RIDEM request to relocate basketball court from Abruzzi Sports complex to a new John Chaffee Blvd. recreation area at 0 Coddington Highway
2. Review of revised plans for Sprouting Rock Drive natural restoration project
3. Review of draft for report on public workshop and interviews relating to park concerns and issues

POSTED JUNE 16, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

6:30 – 7:30 pm

Newport City Hall

43 Broadway

Second Floor Conference Room

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

1. Review RIDOT Pell Bridge Ramps Phase 2 Landscape Plan
2. Update: RIDEM request to relocate basketball court from Abruzzi Sports complex to a new John Chaffee Blvd. recreation area at 0 Coddington Highway
3. Update: Luce Memorial Park maintenance and repairs
4. Update: Middle Passage Port Marker Project
5. Update: Park safety report

POSTED JULY 19, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, September 8, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Newport City Hall

43 Broadway

Council Chambers

EVENTS/PROJECT UPDATES

1. Newport Historic Spring – project update by Leadership Team
2. Update: Middle Passage Port Marker Project
3. Update: Park safety report
4. Review – landscape status for Phase 2 Pell bridge project

POSTED August 22, 2022

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

6:00 – 7:30 pm

City of Newport Recreation Department

The Hut

35 Golden Hill Street

1. Presentation by the Newport Tree Conservancy – 2023 Arbor Day Partnership and State designation
2. Presentation by Friends of the Newport Skatepark
3. Presentation by the Middle Passage Port Markers Project
4. Update Walnut/Chestnut rights-of-way
5. Commission member discussion about project assignment
6. Review of current projects.

AGENDA -- TREE AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

6:00 – 7:30 pm

City Hall

The Council Chamber

43 Broadway

1. Presentation by the Middle Passage Port Markers Project
2. Presentation by Vanderbilt Fountain
3. Update Walnut/Chestnut rights-of-way
4. Newport Transportation Master Plan Final Draft – discussion
5. Park Ranger Program update
6. Commission member discussion about project assignment
7. Updates:
 - John Chaffee Blvd Recreation Area
 - Murphy Field Playground
 - Tree Planting updates
 - Miantonomi Trailhead signs
8. 2023 meeting schedule

Newport Tree and Open Space Commission 25 January 2022

Scott Wheeler, Elizabeth Fuerte, Rob Currier, Maureen Cronin, Bristow Dennis, Lauren Parmelee, Jean Frisbie, Karen DeCamillo

Bike path...work commencing on Poplar.

Scott Fall b&b plating....trees from Central Nurseries. 10 memorial trees via NTC. GPS available to pick actual location. Arbor Day planting for Tim Brown 13 Dec. 2021....good turnout. This satisfies Tree City USA affiliation.

Spring planting....have a grant to work with HEZ. Using the score tool to address inequities in tree plantings. A large order of barefoot for siting within the HEZ. The tool used is a program that digests data of heat, cooling, canopy cover for a designated area. This intends to work within the neighborhood, and all residents. Engagement in planting is vital to success. Basically working where there is low tree cover, and a need for trees cover.

Bareroot trees will still be available to city-wide use. Salve is planning on doing all their own planting with trees they purchase from NTC.

City Forester has been promoted to foreman, and his asst. Jen has been promoted to City Forester. Jen has a new assistant. City will have 4 highly trained foresters. Cemetery Commission working with another non-profit on God's Little Acre. Landscape plan in the works for a "restoration" of this area. Kwanzan cherries are not a species that are historically correct.

North End Plan.....landscape installation follows construction. The round-about planned some careful, and appropriate ideas. Tree selection for the overall plan is basically good. The rotary needs help!

Bike path along the back end of the cemetery....trees were removed, but there will be a replanting. The removal of tree stumps is an issue due to possible damage to grave sites.

Maureen raised the issue of increased pedestrian traffic conflicting with auto traffic at the Poplar crosswalk.

Commentary on a plan for the rotary can be sent to Maureen for starters. Ideas, and concerns and process will be organized via Maureen.

Updates....Abruzzi Basketball RIDEM Grant...re-locating Little League...finding a solution...in process

Kingston Playground...important to that neighborhood. In need of upgrading. City has purchased new equipment, and it is out to bid for construction. Reach out to the neighborhood with and English-Spanish explanation.

Almy Pond...engineering work is still in need to finish.

Pine St. driftway.....encouraging progress. Council approval in the works.

Ballard Park.....closing of the new parcel. Trail improvements not yet completed. Positive support from ALT. Looking to improve the kiosk.

Vanderbilt Fountain....Group is starting out (again), and just in the beginnings of developing public process. More to come!

Miantinomi Park...restrooms being removed. Problems with homeless encampments, and trash. Clearing invasive to open up, and remove hiding places.

Newport Tree and Open Space 22 Feb. 2022

Rob currier (scribe) ; dennis bristow;maureen cronin; jim egan; scot wheeler;
harvey buford; lois vaughan; stephanie szneke; kara dicamillo; lauren parmelee; jean frisbee;
elizabeth fuerte- ; kevin michaud

Presentation on the The Newport Tower by Jim Egan. America's Oldest Secret. 1' x4' test pits to excavate. Minimal invasive biopsy. OSL a dating technique. Asking for 16 cans of dirt! Hope to do all the excavation in one session. The entire job may be 2-4 days. 4 x 8 x 6 foot tent would be required to cover the holes, and excavation. Will the excavated soil be examined? Yes, complete archeological procedure will be followed. Who will be in charge of the dug soil, and the contents? There may be as many as 3 archeologists on site. Artifacts will need to be properly examined, and processed. Dating can be as accurate to 40-50 years. Objective is to learn more about the history of the construction. Point being made to carefully examine all excavations. Thanks to be Jim, and Harvey on this subject.

Lois Vaughan presented concerns about a seemingly increased amount of tree removal. The question being raised is about putting together a tree ordinance of some sort. What protections for trees does this commission have? Private homeowner can put a deed restriction on a particular tree. Loss of permeable space is the key element here. Question rolls out how can we get the word out in this issue. Community support, and understanding will be the first steps. Environmental work done by trees is so critical. This directly connects to the stability of city-wide ecosystems. Time for us to discuss this subject, and pursue action. Pine st. driftway.....Maureen did write a letter of support, on part of this commission. Kingston playground front fence. ...Any possibility of re-using something more attractive? Community Development Block Grant area....perhaps some funds available for this. What are the options? Benches are necessary. Lauren is putting forth a gift of a bench.

Newport Tree and Open Space Commission 30 March 2022

Present: Stephanie, Rob Maureen, Scott --,--,--
(not sure of the names)

RIDOT is in process of reconfiguring the Farewell St. access to the city. Thousands of daffodils have been removed, with talk of being replaced. Scott feels comfortable in dealing with the landscape plan of this huge project. He feels that the state powers, and authorities will be available for discussion on the plan overall. This is a vital element in the successful future of this project. Appropriate tree selection, and sensible choice of landscape plants are very important to the efficient management, and long term benefits expected from this "green" element.

Drafting a landscape ordinance will be a long process involving many moving parts to consider. Maureen plans to include this topic in the monthly agenda of NTOS. Concerns of water runoff, storm drain overload, accelerated loss of water-permeable surface, and polluted free water are just a few of the many obstacles to to address.

Scott has call for 7-8 b&b commemorative trees.

NTC is working with Scott, and HEZ on tree planting in this zone. The challenge is not just to find the tree sites, but to engage the public to get involved.

29 April will be Newport's Arbor Day celebration. Location has yet to be sited, but involvement of public schools students will be a major consideration.

Spouting Rock Drive -- a new engineering firm has been appointed to this. The new firm will need to be updated with all the accepted plans, and neighborhood concerns that have already been covered.

Funding for Kingston playground has been approved.

Work in continuing of the Miantinomi work of clearing invasive, mowing and mulching.

The price tag for the benches for Storer Park have dramatically increased. There could be sites for as many as 11 of them.

The issues of the 2 driftways on Washington St. have gone to the city solicitor, and then on to the Fire-Police for final approval. 3

Newport Tree and Open Space Commission

26 April 2022

Present: Jean Frisbee, Scott, Dennis, Denis, Rob, Maureen

Minutes from last meeting passed

Arbor Day @ Pell School 2 memorial trees honoring 2 teachers who passed away due to Covid-19 complications.

Bare-root trees have arrived, and planting is underway. 20 trees have been reserved for HEZ planting....sites to be finalized. City crew is working overtime to get the trees in the ground, as the season has a very delayed start.

\$500 Commemorative Tree donators will be given GPS coordinates from which to choose a specific site.

Pine St. driftway is in the process of going through the various channels of government. Walnut, and Willow drift ways parking situation will be requiring a vote.

Spouting Rock completed wetland delineation. Work is in process of on funding, and engineering.

Alliance Française will recognize Rochambeau troop movement with interpretive panels.

Historic info-panels throughout town are in need of an upgrade.

Memorial benches for Storer Park have become very expensive. Still, high demand is apparent. City will do a lottery for sponsorship of all available 11 benches.

Miantinomi Park Commission has signed off on bench location.

The State will be soon working on plans to upgrade Brenton Park.

Kinston Playground has been fully cleared, and is ready for the next step of reconstruction.

Playgrounds throughout the City are in need of upgrades. The order of priority will dictate the timing.

Newport Tree and Open Space Commission

24 May 2022

Present; Scott, Maureen, Rob (scribe), Dennis Denis, Stephanie, JeanFrisbee

Parks Safety workshop will be held at the public library 8 June 5-6:30.

The purpose is to offer the opportunity for public input on activities occurring at any, and all of the parks. Public behavior within the park system will be the central issue. NTOS is here to listen to public concern codify special issues, and ultimately present findings to City Council.

Kingston Park....the contractors have finished the construction of play equipment. NTOS would like to have a ribbon cutting, to raise public awareness.

Other parks (Braga, Hunter, Aquidneck, and King) are in the sights for some upgrading, as well.

Cardines Park is showing signs of serious corrosion on the equipment. Possible grant money from Gateway Visitors Center.

The Abruzzi RIDEM grant has been accepted.

Spouting Rock work.....29 June presentation of a simplified version. This includes removing the unused portion of road, plus catch basin, and conservation of the meadow area.

ROW issues to the drift ways at both Chestnut, and Walnut streets. The ITC has this matter in their sights. There is also a safety concern of vehicles blocking access to emergency vehicles. Obstruction of sidewalk space is also a major problem. Other concerns include foggy conditions creating a serious vision hazard of vehicle and water.

Tree and Open Space Commission Meeting

6/29/22 Newport Public Library - Program Room 6-7:30

Attendees: Chairperson Cronin, and 5 Commission members

Item #1 - RIDEM request to relocate basketball court from Abruzzi Sports complex to a new John Chaffee Blvd. recreation area at 0 Coddington Highway

Minor Change: Drinking Fountain

Approved by: 6 members of the commission

Item #2 - Review of revised plans for Sprouting Rock Drive natural restoration project

- Presentation of Sprouting Rock completed by Scott Wheeler
- Funds have been secured through Grant
- Questions that came up prior to meeting and were discussed with the Fire Chief:
 - Was a turnaround required? No need for the North Side but one needed to the South Side; emergency turnaround, with no parking
 - Had it been paved? Asphalt, sidewalk will be removed
- Catch basins in the street will remain but collapsed
- Question from public?
 - Will the underground electrical removed?
 - Wires that will not be connected
- Comment from a neighbor thanking the commission for this plan

Items #3 - Review of draft for report on public workshop and interviews relating to park concerns and issues

- Chairperson Cronin reviewed each section of the working draft, the following was recommended for the Recommendations section:
 - Recommendation to grilling: Note that the Fire Department will respond if someone is grilling in an unsafe manner will be stopped.
 - Recommend to include that info in the General Section
 - Recommendation for signage on what unsafe grilling entails
 - Recommendation for Waste Pickup: Experiment with pack-it-in and pack-it-out policy
 - Recommend to do further research
 - Experiment with Queen Anne Square
- **Approved by:** 6 members of the commission

Public Comment:

- Fireworks in the parks a concern, discussion to follow on fireworks and relation to ordinances
 - Response from Commission: Covered by the larger mandate and can't be included in report
- Commission was working within the regulations of the city and there was no discussion on if those regulations should be changed
 - Purpose of the workshop was to see what the issues were, gain feedback, and relay back to Council

Newport Tree and Open Space Commission

8 September 2022

Present: Maureen Cronin (chair), Rob Currier (scribe), Stephanie Szneke, Scott Wheeler, Denis, xxx

Lily Dick from the Historic Spring Park project gave an update of the progress, and to offer the roadmap for the future of this project. This project was instigated in 2014; it is considered the birthplace of Newport; it was at that time the primary source of fresh water for settlers. This involvement is privately funded, and under the jurisdiction of the Church Community Housing. Lily reported that the fundraising goal is close to be attained. Once the project is complete, the idea is to hand over the park (with endowment) to the City. Lily's thorough presentation of the construction details and aesthetics gave the commission accurate insight. A few points were brought up for further consideration. The park celebrates the religious tolerance, and freedom. The element of water is crucial. As the founding site of Newport, this park will need a conservation easement for protection. The NTOS letter of approval to the city council will be an important element to the ultimate success.

Update on the Middle Passage Port Marker Project

This is a private group. There has yet been no city input. We are looking for a plan, and a vote.

Park Safety

Ideas to increase safety include a park ranger component, and new signage. Safety on the beaches seems to be a primary concern. One point getting much attention is the concept of carry in/carry out of all elements.

Pell Bridge off-ramps

Maureen, and Scott will meet with the landscape architects to review various points, i.e., plant species, adopt-a-spot, maintenance, etc.

Stadium lighting is complete. Both Braga playground, and Cardine playground are facing funding complications at the moment.