

**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE-TREE COMMISSION
MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING**

April 16, 2025

7:00 PM

Conference room A, East Providence City Hall
145 Taunton Ave. East Providence, RI 02914

1. **Call to Order:** 7:03 PM
2. **Roll Call:** Present: Carol Auer (chair), Jennifer Tierney (co-chair), Meg Robinson (secretary), Joseph Gibson, Elizabeth Kinder, Molly Ahern (Planning Department). Absent with notification: City Council Member Anna Sousa. Absent without notification: City Tree Warden.
3. **Approval of minutes:** Minutes from March 31, 2025 were reviewed. Motion to approve made by EK and seconded by MR. Unanimous approval from members.
4. **Public comment:** No public comment.
5. **New Business:**
 - A. Analysis of city ordinances affecting the urban forest - AJ Elton and Molly Henry from the Green Infrastructure Center reviewed their report from 2024. MH outlined how the city could create a plan for tree care and protection which would include overall goals, monitoring systems, emergency responses, and the reduction of impervious surfaces. She underscored the need for an Urban Forest Management Plan. Challenges associated with the enforcement of current tree ordinances and the protection of trees on private property were discussed. MH suggested developing a manual of best practices and tree protection standards that could be used by city staff, developers, and residents. MH mentioned that Warren, RI is creating a voluntary easement program for homeowners with trees greater than 32".
 - B. Newman Cemetery tree planting project - AJ Elton confirmed that the Green Infrastructure Center would provide funding for the planting of trees at the historic Newman Cemetery. The project would be coordinated with the Friends of Newman Cemetery with the goal of creating a more inviting natural space for visitors. The commission discussed ideas such as planting tree groves, creating walking paths, placing benches under trees, and creating an arboretum. CA agreed to organize a site visit in May to help develop the fall tree planting project.
 - C. Updates on tree planting projects:

1. Arbor Day event at Hennessy Elementary School -The event will be held on April 22 at 10:00 AM. Students will plant trees including one dedicated to a retiring teacher. Consulting arborist Mr. Doug Still will teach children how to plant trees.
2. Weaver Library Beech Tree event – An event will be held on May 5th at 6:00 PM to honor the Weaver Beech tree.
3. Kent Heights Recreation Field- The landscaping has been largely completed and the area is expected to be open by this summer.
4. Rhode Island Energy – The company will be removing trees in their right of way as they renovate electric utilities in the city. The company will provide approximately 130 trees to compensate for tree removal.

6. Old business:

- A. Update on the USDA Urban and Community Forest Grant – Trees planted at Hennessy Elementary School are the first project funded by the grant. MA is hiring summer interns who will be part of the youth workforce development component of the grant.

7. **Liaison Report from Conservation Commission:** MR reported that CA presented information about the urban forest to the Conservation Commission in March. The Conservation Commission is seeking 2 new members, and MR asked everyone to encourage potential candidates. The annual Earth Day cleanup will be held at Boyden Park on May 3rd.
8. **Liaison Report from City Staff:** MA announced that new EP community center will break ground this summer. Also, 15 new trees will be planted at the Silver Spring school.
9. **Adjournment:** 8:50 PM