

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014

Present: Ald. Sangiolo, Blazar, Hess-Mahan, Leary, Norton, Rice and Baker

Absent: Ald. Kalis

Also Present: Ald. Crossley and Fuller

City Staff Present: Marc Welch, Marie Lawlor and Karyn Dean

Item recommitted by Board of Aldermen on April 22, 2014

#397-13 ALD. SANGIOLO on behalf of the URBAN TREE COMMISSION, proposing amendments to the Tree Preservation Ordinance. [10/28/13 @ 2:46 PM]

(Approved as amended 7-0 on April 9, 2014)

APPROVED AS AMENDED 6-0 (Baker not voting)

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo explained that this item was voted out of Committee on April 9th but was then recommitted by the full board back to Committee on April 22, 2014 to resolve some remaining questions. Marc Welch, Director of Urban Forestry, said that he wrote a memo in response to some questions from Ald. Fuller regarding the impact of the new tree ordinance to homeowners. It is attached and Ald. Fuller was satisfied with the response.

Exempt Lot Definition

Ald. Crossley had some concerns about the *Exempt lot* definition, which had been amended as follows:

Exempt lot: A lot which meets all of the following criteria:

- 1. The lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four families at the time any protected tree(s) are removed.*
- 2. The lot owner at the time of protected tree removal has owned the lot continuously for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the removal of any protected tree(s).*
- 3. The existing structure on the lot must remain occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.*
- 4. The lot must be owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.*

Ald. Crossley felt that rules and definitions were being combined in this section, in particular in parts 3. and 4. Marie Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor said that stylistically it could be done this way and they chose to do so because they want the message to be clear.

A suggestion was made to make the section more consistent and the Committee agreed to change 3. and 4. as follows:

3. *The existing structure on the lot ~~must~~ remains occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.*

4. *The lot ~~must be~~ remains owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.*

Authority

There was also a concern about to whom the authority would fall in section (c) *Standards for grant or denial* (of tree permits) of the ordinance. Ald. Crossley felt it was not specifically stated that the tree warden would be the one making the determinations. Ms. Lawlor and Mr. Welch agreed that the previous reference in section (b) *Review of permit applications* to the tree warden as the receiver and reviewer of the application, and that the tree warden would then send the application to ISD with a determination of whether it was granted or denied, indicated that the authority of granting or denying a permit was that of the tree warden. Ald. Crossley was satisfied with this response.

The Findings, Intent and Purpose Statement

The Findings, Intent and Purpose statement that had been adopted with the original tree ordinance had been left out of the Ordinance book and instead an editor's note referred the reader to the City Clerk's office where it could be found on file. It was unclear why it was done this way, but Ald. Hess-Mahan had suggested it be added to the ordinance in full and the editor's note be deleted. The Urban Tree Commission submitted an alternative Purpose statement to the Committee which reads:

Sec. 21-80 Purpose.

Because many valuable trees on private property are being lost without replacement, there is need for an ordinance for the preservation and replacement of those trees while allowing for reasonable improvement of land within the city.

The preservation of the private tree canopy and the planting of replacement trees is intended to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the city; to preserve the character of the wooded and natural areas; to reduce energy consumption; to protect air quality; to baffle noise; to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife; to reduce topsoil erosion and stormwater runoff; to protect and increase property values; and to enhance the overall appearance of the city.

There was some concern by several Committee members that the Urban Tree Commission's statement did not specifically state that the concern is with the loss of trees due to development of lots. However, it was acknowledged that although that would not be the only circumstance under which trees were lost, it was the strongest intent of these amendments. Ald. Hess-Mahan recommended retaining the first paragraph of the original Findings, Intent and Purpose statement. Ald. Crossley had issues with the original Findings, Intent and Purpose statement. It included concerns and statements that are not relevant to the intent of the ordinance, in her opinion. It was recommended to keep in place the original Findings, Intent and Purpose statement's first paragraph, delete the rest, and add the Urban Tree Commissions second

paragraph. Ald. Fuller wanted to add the word “healthy” to describe the trees that the ordinance is trying to protect but the Committee was not in favor. The Committee agreed to remove the word “valuable” from the first sentence of the first paragraph as there was some discussion about whether that was a necessary description.

Miscellaneous

Ald. Crossley said that although it is difficult to lose mature trees, sometimes it is advantageous to have an old tree removed that may be near the end of its life. Trees do not live forever. Replacing an older, mature but dying tree with equal inches of younger trees will ultimately add to the canopy.

Ald. Leary wondered if there could be a way to protect historic trees. Ald. Danberg has discussed docketing an item to look at that issue.

Ald. Hess-Mahan asked if the younger trees that replace the more mature trees are able to absorb water run-off as well. Mr. Welch explained that trees do mitigate stormwater run-off. The problems that some residents have with water on their properties after tree removal in their neighborhood could also be a result of grade changes and not only due to the tree removal. The replacement trees will ultimately provide the mitigation but not immediately, and over time will provide more protection because several trees generally are planted to replace one more mature tree.

The Committee voted to approve the language as amended by retaining the first paragraph of the original Findings, Intent and Purpose statement, remove the word “valuable” from the first sentence, and add the second paragraph of the Urban Tree Commission’s draft. The other changes are in the Exempt Lot Definition as was noted.

Redline and clean versions of the approved draft ordinance are attached, along with the draft Board Order.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Mah Sangiolo



SETTI D. WARREN
MAYOR

URBAN FORESTRY

A division of
NEWTON PARKS AND RECREATION

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Office: (617) 796-1530
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ROBERT J. DERUBEIS
COMMISSIONER

Memorandum

To: Programs and Services Committee

Date: April 25, 2014

From: Marc R. Welch
Director of Urban Forestry
Newton Parks and Recreation

Dear Committee,

During the recent discussions regarding the update to the Tree Preservation Ordinance one of the issues raised has been the impact to residents who qualify as Exempt. One of the concerns has been that owners of Exempt properties would be required to hire professional services, at great expense, to inventory and record the trees on their property. To address this concern below is an explanation of the process.

Properties where trees are to be removed where no construction will take place. – Property owner is not required to complete any paperwork or file for any permit. They may remove protected trees without notifying the City. The only requirement is that they own the home, and it stays occupied, for 18 months following the removal of trees.

Properties where trees are to be removed where construction will take place and property stays occupied. – Property owner will complete form at Inspectional Services that states that the property is exempt and that the current owner will own the property for 18 months and it will remain occupied for the same 18 months. The form will ask how many trees are being removed. Applicant will not be required to provide a plan showing these trees. There is no fee for filing this form. This is almost identical to the current practice. The one difference is that we will ask the number of trees to be removed, the property owner will certainly be able to count the trees and provide this information. There should be no need for the owner to hire someone to do this.

Properties where trees are to be removed where construction will take place and property in vacant. – Property owner will file for a tree removal permit. To be exempt from tree replacement requirements the owner will have to state they will own the property for 18 months following issuance of the new Certificate of Occupancy and the property must be occupied for those same 18 months. The owner will be asked to show on some type of site plan where the trees are that are to be removed. This information does not have to be provided by an architect, engineer, Arborist, or other professional person. We accept this information hand drawn on a sketch. We always inspect the sites to verify site conditions.

**Note – We always encourage people to call, email, or meet with us prior to doing any work. We will guide people whenever possible with what they need to do. We routinely meet with builders and homeowners on site and review the trees with them and assess condition and replacement requirements. In most cases the applicant will use this information in place of hiring a professional.

DIVISION 3. TREE PRESERVATION

Sec. 21-80 Findings, intent, and purpose.

The board of aldermen has determined that many ~~valuable~~ trees are being lost without replacement incident to demolition of existing buildings in order to construct new buildings and lot clearing in connection with the construction of new buildings on previously undeveloped land. The Board has further determined that trees have been lost, severely damaged or disfigured through excessive or improper pruning or other than natural causes. The result is a net loss of the tree population in the city. The board has further determined that the city has insufficient legal vehicles to assure that such development adequately preserves, protects and provides for replacement of trees.

The preservation of the private tree canopy and the planting of replacement trees is intended to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the city; to preserve the character of the wooded and natural areas; to reduce energy consumption; to protect air quality; to baffle noise; to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife; to reduce topsoil erosion and stormwater runoff; to protect and increase property values; and to enhance the overall appearance of the city.

~~Therefore, the board of aldermen deems it necessary and desirable in the interest of public health, safety and welfare to enact an ordinance for the preservation and replacement of trees while allowing for reasonable improvement of land within the city. It is the public policy of the city to add to the tree population within the city, where possible, and to maintain, to the greatest extent possible, existing trees within the city while allowing for reasonable development of land within the city. The planting of additional trees and the preservation of existing trees in the city is intended to accomplish, where possible, the following objectives:~~

- ~~(a) To preserve trees as an important public resource enhancing the quality of life and the general welfare of the city and enhancing its unique character and physical, historical, and aesthetic environment;~~
- ~~(b) To preserve the essential character of those areas throughout the city which are heavily wooded and in a more natural state;~~
- ~~(c) To enhance and preserve the air quality of the city through the filtering effect of trees on air pollutants;~~
- ~~(d) To reduce noise within the city through the baffle and barrier effect of trees on the spread of noise;~~
- ~~(e) To reduce topsoil erosion through the soil retention effect of tree roots;~~
- ~~(f) To reduce energy consumption through the wind break and shade effects of trees when they are properly placed;~~
- ~~(g) To preserve and enhance nesting areas for birds and other wildlife which in turn assist control of insects;~~

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ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS MADE AT 4-30-14 PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

- ~~(h) To reduce storm water runoff and the costs associated therewith and replenish ground water supplies;~~
- ~~(i) To protect and increase property values;~~
- ~~(j) To protect and enhance the visual quality of the city.~~

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Sec. 21-81. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Aggregate diameter: The combined diameter of a multiple trunk tree measured at breast height.

Building: The term "building" shall be as defined in section 30-1.

Certified arborist: An arborist certified by the Massachusetts Arborists Association or International Society of Arboriculture, or any successor organization.

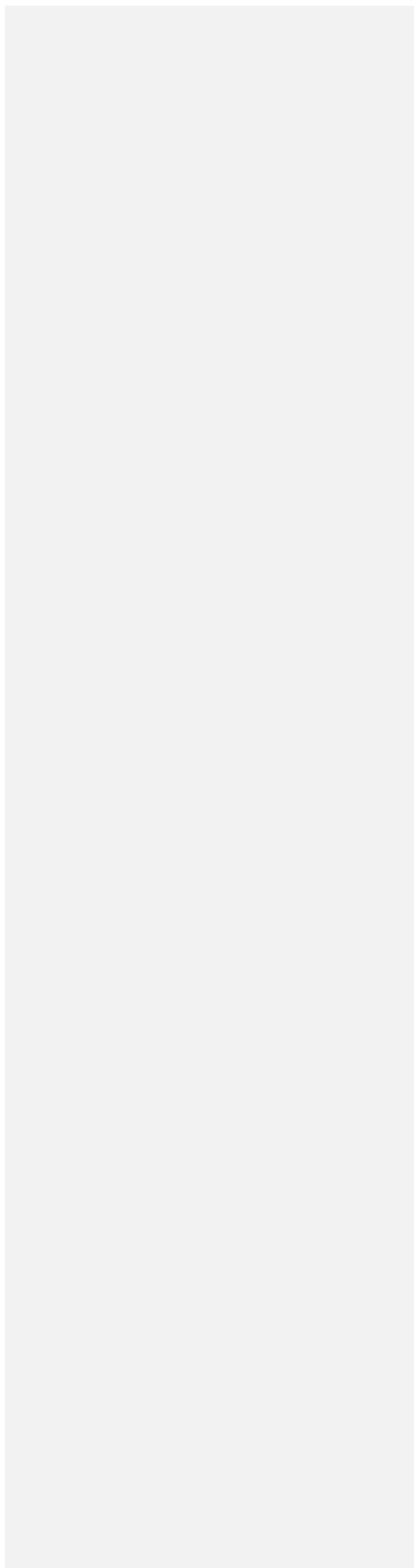
Diameter breast height (DBH): The diameter of the trunk of a tree 4½ feet above the existing grade at the base of the tree.

Drip line: A vertical line running through the outermost portion of the crown of a tree and extending to the ground.

Exempt lot: A lot which meets all of the following criteria:

1. The lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four families at the time any protected tree(s) are removed.
2. The lot owner at the time of protected tree removal has owned the lot continuously for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the removal of any protected tree(s).
3. The existing structure on the lot ~~must~~ remains occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.
4. The lot ~~must be~~ remains owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

Exterior work permit: A permit or approval which is required in order to perform work on a vacant lot or to the exterior of a building on a lot, including, but not limited to the following: a building permit; a review of an alteration of contour of land if required pursuant to section 30-5(c)(1); curb cut and street opening permits; an order of conditions; certificates of appropriateness, nonapplicability, or hardship; a demolition permit pursuant to section 22-44; site plan approval pursuant to section 30-23; subdivision approval; a special permit pursuant to section 30-24; a comprehensive permit.



DIVISION 3. TREE PRESERVATION

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The preservation of the private tree canopy and the planting of replacement trees is intended to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the city; to preserve the character of the wooded and natural areas; to reduce energy consumption; to protect air quality; to baffle noise; to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife; to reduce topsoil erosion and stormwater runoff; to protect and increase property values; and to enhance the overall appearance of the city.

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Diameter breast height (DBH): The diameter of the trunk of a tree 4½ feet above the existing grade at the base of the tree.

Drip line: A vertical line running through the outermost portion of the crown of a tree and extending to the ground.

~~*Exempt lot:* A lot which meets either of the following criteria at the time that the tree removal permit application is filed or an exterior work permit is sought or at the time that trees are being removed:~~

~~(a) the lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four (4) families; or~~

~~(b) the lot is vacant and is adjacent to a lot used solely as an owner-occupied dwelling for up to four (4) families and owned by the same person and the owner of such vacant lot wishes to remove trees from such vacant lot in order to construct a dwelling for up to four (4) families which said owner will occupy.~~

Exempt lot: A lot which meets all of the following criteria:

1. The lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four families at the time any protected tree(s) are removed.

2. The lot owner at the time of protected tree removal has owned the lot continuously for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the removal of any protected tree(s).

3. The existing structure on the lot remains occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

4. The lot remains owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

Exterior work permit: A permit or approval which is required in order to perform work on a vacant lot or to the exterior of a building on a lot, including, but not limited to the following: a building permit; a review of an alteration of contour of land if required pursuant to section 30-5(c)(1) a special permit for grade change of more than three (3) feet pursuant to section 30-5(b)(4); curb cut and street opening permits; an order of conditions; certificates of appropriateness, nonapplicability, or hardship; a demolition permit pursuant to section 22-44; site plan approval pursuant to section 30-23; subdivision approval; a special permit pursuant to section 30-24; a comprehensive permit.

Occupied Lot- A lot containing a legally constructed, permanent structure, used primarily as a dwelling that is currently being legally occupied and lived in and used as a residence by a person or persons. The dwelling must have a functioning, legally permitted, permanent water service, permanent sanitary service, and permanent electrical service.

Person: Any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company or organization of any kind including, but not limited to, the person removing a protected tree as well as the owner of the real property from which the tree is removed. The definition of "person" shall not include the City of Newton.

Protected tree: Any tree having a diameter of eight inches (8") DBH or larger or having an aggregate diameter of fifteen inches (15") DBH or larger and which is located on land subject to the provisions of section 20-32.

Pruning standards: Standards for pruning as defined in the City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995 and any future amendments or revisions to the same.

Remove (including removing and removal): The cutting down of any protected tree and all other acts which cause the actual removal or the effective removal through damaging, poisoning or other direct or indirect actions resulting in the death of a protected tree, including, but not limited to, excessive or improper pruning.

Tree Manual: The City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995, and any future amendments and revisions to the same. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99)

Tree Warden: The commissioner of parks and recreation or his designee. (Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-31)

~~Editor's note—Ordinance V 275 contained a lengthy and detailed Declaration of legislative findings and intent, which is on file in the records of the Board of Aldermen.~~

Sec. 21-82. Applicability, permit or certificate of exemption required.

(a) *Applicability:* The terms and provisions of this article shall apply to any protected tree located on land within the city not owned by the city, the commonwealth, or any independent authority of the commonwealth, or by the federal government except protected tree(s) located on an exempt lot pursuant to paragraphs (c) and (d) below.

(b) *Permit, certificate of exemption:* No person shall remove a protected tree on a non-exempt lot located on land subject to the provisions of this article, or commence legally permitted exterior work on any lot without first obtaining a tree ~~removal~~ permit or a certificate of exemption from the tree warden. Applications shall be made in writing on forms specified by the tree warden. ~~An owner of an exempt lot shall not be required to apply for a tree removal permit, provided, however, that an owner of an exempt lot who seeks an exterior work permit must certify to the tree warden on forms provided by the tree warden that the owner intends to own such exempt lot for at least twelve consecutive months. There shall be no fee for filing a certificate of exemption. (Ord. No. V 275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-31)~~

(c) Exempt lot, certificate of exemption: The owner of an exempt lot shall not be required to apply for a tree permit, provided however, that an owner of an exempt lot who seeks an exterior work permit must certify to the tree warden on form(s) provided by the tree warden, that as of the date on the form(s) the lot qualifies as an exempt lot and will remain an exempt lot for eighteen months following tree removal. There shall be no fee for filing a certificate of exemption.

(1) The tree warden shall determine whether a property is an occupied lot for the purposes of establishing exempt lot status. The property owner shall, if requested by the tree warden provide proof of ownership as well as a written statement confirming ownership and that a person or persons are living in the property.

(2) If lot ownership changes during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) on an exempt lot, the new owner must apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed. If, However, a change of ownership occurs on a lot for which an extension of exempt lot status for non-occupancy during construction has been issued within the eighteen months prior to the change in ownership, the person issued such extension shall apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed.

(d) Extension of exempted lot status: If at any point during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) the property is no longer an occupied lot, the current owner of the lot must apply for a tree permit. If the non-occupancy is due to legally permitted construction, the tree warden may grant an extension of exempt lot status for the duration of the construction, provided:

(1) The owner intends to own the lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued; and

(2) The property remains an occupied lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued.

(3) Upon request of an applicant for exempt lot status extension, the tree warden may also waive the requirement that the lot be continuously owned by the same owner for ninety (90) days prior to protected tree removal provided the owner intends to own the lot for twenty-one months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension is granted.

(4) If at any time during the applicable eighteen or twenty-one month period the lot ownership changes or the lot is not occupied, the tree warden shall revoke the tree permit and exempt lot status extension. The person issued the extension shall file a new tree permit application and shall replace any protected trees that were removed.

(5) Any person issued an extension of exempt lot status must report to the tree warden any change of ownership and any change of occupancy status within fifteen (15) days of the change if that change takes place during the applicable eighteen (18) month or twenty-one (21) month period following the date the certificate of occupancy issued.

Sec. 21-83. Permit application.

(a) *Contents, fee:* An application for a tree ~~removal~~ permit shall be submitted to the tree warden. The application for a tree ~~removal~~ permit shall be accompanied by a fee in the amount of one hundred fifty ~~five~~ dollars (\$150.00) and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) The shape and dimensions of the parcel of real property to be developed, together with the existing and proposed locations of structures and improvements, if any;
- (2) A tree plan showing the location, type and size of each protected tree indicating which protected tree(s) are to be removed, and the location, type and size of replacement trees;
- (3) The proposed relocation of any existing protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree is to be relocated and maintained;
- (4) The location of existing and proposed underground or overhead utility services, existing and proposed roadways, bikeways, walkways and parking areas;
- (5) Any proposed grade changes which might adversely affect or endanger any protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree shall be protected and maintained;
- (6) The proposed method of protecting the remaining protected trees during the course of the construction, in accordance with section 20-34, subsection (a).

(b) *Review of permit applications:* The tree warden shall review applications for tree ~~removal~~ permits in accordance with the provisions of this article. The tree warden shall date stamp or otherwise record the date of filing of each application for a tree ~~removal~~ permit. The tree warden shall complete the review of each tree ~~removal~~ permit application no later than ten (10) business days after the submission of a completed application to the tree warden and shall report to the commissioner of inspectional services within ten (10) business days of a request with respect to any tree ~~removal~~ permit application submitted in connection with a building permit as to whether said tree ~~removal~~ permit has been granted or denied. If no such report is received by the commissioner within the above-stated time period, he shall accept an application for a building permit without receipt of such report.

(c) *Standards for grant or denial:* No tree ~~removal~~ permit shall be issued unless one of the following conditions exists:

(1) The protected tree will be relocated or replaced on site.

~~(2) The protected tree will be replaced by payment in lieu of planting replacement trees as outlined in section 21-86.~~

~~(2) The protected tree will be replaced by the off site planting of tree(s) of the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches. In the event that a tree of the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches cannot be planted, then multiple smaller replacement trees may be planted provided that, wherever practicable, as determined by the tree warden, the total DBH of the replacement trees shall, when added together, equal the total DBH of the protected tree that has been removed. Off site plantings shall be made in accordance with written priorities established by the tree warden as stated in the Tree Manual. The tree warden may specify that replacement trees be of a minimum caliper when consistent with current accepted practice as stated in the Tree Manual.~~

(3) The protected tree is interfering with existing structures, utilities, streets, sidewalks or other existing improvements ~~and the relocation of the protected tree is not feasible as certified to the tree warden by a certified arborist.~~

(4) The protected tree is dead, diseased, injured, in danger of falling, dangerously close to existing structures, is causing disruption of public utility service, is causing drainage or passage problems upon rights-of-way, or poses a threat to pedestrian or vehicular safety.

(5) The removal of the protected tree is necessary and desirable in order to enhance or benefit the health or condition of other trees on the same site as certified to the tree warden by a certified arborist.

~~(6) No protected tree(s) are to be removed from the site and appropriate tree protection measures will be in place where necessary as determined by the tree warden.~~

(d) *Conditions:* Upon the issuance of a tree ~~removal~~ permit, the tree warden may prescribe in writing such protective measures for existing protected trees as he deems necessary. Before site disturbance may begin, the tree warden may make a determination that the prescribed protective measures have been adequately provided.

(e) *Construction:* Except as provided in a tree ~~removal~~ permit, construction activities under the drip line of a protected tree are prohibited. Activities include, but are not limited to, trenching or grading, storage of materials or equipment, passage of heavy equipment within the drip line and spillage of chemicals or other materials, which are damaging to trees.

(f) *Suspension or revocation:* A tree ~~removal~~ permit may be suspended or revoked at any time by the tree warden upon written notice to the permit holder that the permit holder has failed to comply with either this article or the conditions of the permit. The written notice shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery and shall provide an opportunity for the permit holder to correct the noncompliance and apply for a renewal of the tree ~~removal~~ permit upon compliance, where practicable. The suspension or revocation of a tree ~~removal~~ permit in accordance with this subsection shall not affect the validity of a building permit issued in reliance upon the issuance (granting) of such tree ~~removal~~ permit nor shall such suspension or revocation be cause for withholding the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

(g) *Appeal:* Any person aggrieved by a decision of the tree warden may file an appeal with the mayor or his designee. Said appeal must be in writing and must be received by the mayor or his designee within five (5) business days of issuance of the tree warden's decision. Upon receipt of such appeal, the mayor or his designee

shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. The mayor or his designee shall make a final decision on the matter within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the appeal. The mayor or his designee shall include in the decision the rationale therefor. Upon issuance of the final decision, the mayor or his designee shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each ward alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. There shall be no further appeal of the matter decided by the mayor or his designee. No protected trees shall be removed while an appeal is pending. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Ord. No. X-202, 04-03-06; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-33)

Sec. 21-84. Activities not requiring a permit.

(a) *Pruning*: A permit is not required for the pruning of protected trees. However, in order to prevent excessive pruning and topping of trees and to prevent pruning that will be hazardous to the health and natural appearance of the tree, compliance with approved pruning standards is required, and failure to meet these standards is a violation of this article. The tree warden shall maintain on file at all times a copy of the current edition the Tree Manual and shall make copies of the Tree Manual available for the cost of reproduction upon request.

(b) *Emergencies*: If any protected tree shall be determined to be in a hazardous condition so as to immediately endanger the public health, safety or welfare or cause an immediate disruption of public services and require immediate removal without delay, oral authorization may be given by the tree warden to remove such tree, utilizing such professional criteria and technical assistance as he deems necessary, and the protected tree may be removed without obtaining a written permit as otherwise required by this article. The tree warden shall memorialize in writing each such oral authorization to remove a tree and keep a record of the same.

(c) *Waiver*: The requirements of this article may be waived by the tree warden during the period of an emergency such as a tornado, windstorm, flood or other act of God. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-34)

Sec. 21-85. Tree replacement.

(a) *Required*: A protected tree shall be replaced in the manner provided in subsection (b) hereof in each instance in which a protected tree was removed from land subject to the provisions of section ~~20-32-21-82~~ without a tree ~~removal~~ permit.

(b) *Standards*: A person who has removed a protected tree and is required to replace such tree pursuant to subsection (a) hereof or as a condition of granting a tree ~~removal~~ permit in accordance with section ~~21-8320-33~~, shall replace such tree within ~~eighteen (18) months~~ one year, or prior to transfer of property ownership whichever comes first from the date ~~the tree permit is issued of removal~~ and in accordance with the following standards:

- (1) A replacement tree shall be of the same or similar species or such other species as deemed advisable by the tree warden in accordance with the Tree Manual and shall have the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches as that of the protected tree that has been removed.
- (2) In the event that a tree of the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches cannot be planted, then multiple smaller replacement trees may be planted provided that, wherever practicable, as determined by the tree warden, the total DBH of the replacement trees shall, when added together, equal the total DBH of the protected tree that has been removed. The tree warden may specify that replacement trees be of a minimum caliper when consistent with current accepted practice as stated in the Tree Manual.
- (3) A replacement tree shall be required to survive for a minimum of one ~~eighteen (18) months~~ (1) year from the date it is planted. The person planting the tree shall provide documentation as to the date of planting and file the same with the tree warden within fifteen (15) days of the planting of said replacement tree.

- (4) A replacement tree shall be planted on the same lot from which the tree was removed, ~~or at a location determined by the tree warden in accordance with the priorities stated in the Tree Manual.~~ (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-35)

Sec. 21-86. Tree replacement fund.

(a) *Established:* There is hereby established a tree replacement fund which shall be held in a separate identifiable account and administered in accordance with applicable provisions of the General Laws. Any payments into the tree replacement fund required by this article shall be deposited in the tree replacement fund and shall be used in accordance with subsection (c) hereof.

(b) *Payment in lieu of planting replacement tree(s):* In lieu of planting a replacement tree as provided in section ~~21-8520-35~~, a person who has been granted a tree ~~removal~~ permit may make a contribution to a tree replacement fund in an amount equal to the cost to replace the tree in accordance with the provisions of section ~~21-8520-35~~, which cost shall be determined by the tree warden ~~based on the City's current cost to purchase and install trees, who shall obtain written estimates from at least two (2) tree companies.~~

(c) *Maintenance of tree replacement fund:* The tree replacement fund shall be maintained in a separate account in accordance with state law. All sums deposited into such fund shall be used solely for the purpose of buying, planting and maintaining trees in the city. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-36)

Sec. 21-87 Rule and regulations. The tree warden is authorized to promulgate reasonable rules and regulations to implement administration of sections 21-80 through 21-90.

Sec. 21-878. Enforcement.

(a) *Notice of violation:* Any person who violates any of the provisions of this article shall be notified by the tree warden of the specific violation by certified ~~or registered~~ mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. The notice shall set forth the nature of the violation and a reasonable time period within which compliance must be had. The tree warden shall send notice of violation of section ~~20-3221-86, subsection (e)~~, which notice shall include the date by which trees were to be replaced or payment was to be made for purposes of computing the "per day" violation fine, as provided in section ~~21-8920-38, subsection (b)~~.

(b) *Stop work order:*

- (1) Upon notice from the tree warden that work on any protected tree, or lot on which a protected tree is located, is being performed contrary to the provisions of this article, such work shall be immediately stopped. The stop work order shall be in writing and shall be given to the owner of the property involved, or to the owner's agent, or to the person doing the work; and shall state the conditions under which work will be permitted to resume.
- (2) The tree warden is also authorized to request the agency which has granted an exterior work permit to order, to the extent permissible by law, that the owner cease any activity pursuant to the exterior work permit that might affect such protected tree while a stop work order is pending.
- (3) Any person who shall continue any work in or about the protected tree or lot on which a protected tree is located after having been served with a stop work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove a violation or unsafe condition, shall be liable to a fine of not more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for each such violation. Each day during which a violation exists shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Injunctive relief:*

- (1) Whenever there exists reasonable cause to believe that a person is violating this article or any standards adopted pursuant to this article or any term, condition or provision of an approved tree ~~removal~~ permit, the city may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this article, institute a civil action in the name of the city for a mandatory or prohibitory injunction and an order of abatement demanding the defendant to correct the unlawful condition upon or cease the unlawful use of the property.
- (2) Upon determination of a court that an alleged violation is occurring, it shall enter such order or judgment as is necessary to abate the violation. The institution of an action for injunctive relief under this subsection shall not relieve any party to such proceedings from any civil penalty prescribed for violation of this article. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-37)

Sec. 21-~~889~~. Penalties.

(a) *Removal without a permit:* Each instance in which a protected tree is removed without a permit shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00).

(b) *Failure to replace trees or make payment:* Each failure to replace a tree or make a payment into the tree replacement fund shall constitute a separate violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order:* Each instance where there is a failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

~~(d)~~ *City trees:* Nothing herein shall be construed to require the city to make a payment into the tree replacement fund for any tree(s) which it removes. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-38)

Sec. 21-~~9089~~. Severability, effect on other laws.

(a) *Severability:* The provisions of this article are severable. If any section, provision, or portion of this article is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the remaining provisions of this article shall continue to be valid.

(b) *Conflict of laws:* This article shall not apply to any public shade tree as that term is defined by the General Laws, Chapter 87 or any amendments thereto. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with the General Laws, Chapter 87 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said Chapter 87, such provision shall not be valid. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with existing special permit procedures as provided in section 30-24 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said special permit procedures, such provision shall not be valid. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-39)

DIVISION 3. TREE PRESERVATION

Sec. 21-80 Findings, intent, and purpose.

The board of aldermen has determined that many trees are being lost without replacement incident to demolition of existing buildings in order to construct new buildings and lot clearing in connection with the construction of new buildings on previously undeveloped land. The Board has further determined that trees have been lost, severely damaged or disfigured through excessive or improper pruning or other than natural causes. The result is a net loss of the tree population in the city. The board has further determined that the city has insufficient legal vehicles to assure that such development adequately preserves, protects and provides for replacement of trees.

The preservation of the private tree canopy and the planting of replacement trees is intended to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the city; to preserve the character of the wooded and natural areas; to reduce energy consumption; to protect air quality; to baffle noise; to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife; to reduce topsoil erosion and stormwater runoff; to protect and increase property values; and to enhance the overall appearance of the city.

Sec. 21-81. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Aggregate diameter: The combined diameter of a multiple trunk tree measured at breast height.

Building: The term "building" shall be as defined in section 30-1.

Certified arborist: An arborist certified by the Massachusetts Arborists Association or International Society of Arboriculture, or any successor organization.

Diameter breast height (DBH): The diameter of the trunk of a tree 4½ feet above the existing grade at the base of the tree.

Drip line: A vertical line running through the outermost portion of the crown of a tree and extending to the ground.

Exempt lot: A lot which meets all of the following criteria:

1. The lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four families at the time any protected tree(s) are removed.
2. The lot owner at the time of protected tree removal has owned the lot continuously for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the removal of any protected tree(s).
3. The existing structure on the lot remains occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

4. The lot remains owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

Exterior work permit: A permit or approval which is required in order to perform work on a vacant lot or to the exterior of a building on a lot, including, but not limited to the following: a building permit; a review of an alteration of contour of land if required pursuant to section 30-5(c)(1); curb cut and street opening permits; an order of conditions; certificates of appropriateness, nonapplicability, or hardship; a demolition permit pursuant to section 22-44; site plan approval pursuant to section 30-23; subdivision approval; a special permit pursuant to section 30-24; a comprehensive permit.

Occupied Lot– A lot containing a legally constructed, permanent structure, used primarily as a dwelling that is currently being legally occupied and lived in and used as a residence by a person or persons. The dwelling must have a functioning, legally permitted, permanent water service, permanent sanitary service, and permanent electrical service.

Person: Any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company or organization of any kind including, but not limited to, the person removing a protected tree as well as the owner of the real property from which the tree is removed. The definition of "person" shall not include the City of Newton.

Protected tree: Any tree having a diameter of eight inches (8") DBH or larger or having an aggregate diameter of fifteen inches (15") DBH or larger and which is located on land subject to the provisions of section 20-32.

Pruning standards: Standards for pruning as defined in the City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995 and any future amendments or revisions to the same.

Remove (including removing and removal): The cutting down of any protected tree and all other acts which cause the actual removal or the effective removal through damaging, poisoning or other direct or indirect actions resulting in the death of a protected tree, including, but not limited to, excessive or improper pruning.

Tree Manual: The City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995, and any future amendments and revisions to the same. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99)

Tree Warden: The commissioner of parks and recreation or his designee. (Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-31)

Sec. 21-82. Applicability, permit or certificate of exemption required.

(a) *Applicability:* The terms and provisions of this article shall apply to any protected tree located on land within the city not owned by the city, the commonwealth, or any independent authority of the commonwealth, or by the federal government except protected tree(s) located on an exempt lot pursuant to paragraphs (c) and (d) below.

(b) *Permit, certificate of exemption:* No person shall remove a protected tree on a non-exempt lot located on land subject to the provisions of this article, or commence legally permitted exterior work on any lot without first obtaining a tree permit or a certificate of exemption from the tree warden. Applications shall be made in writing on forms specified by the tree warden.

(c) *Exempt lot, certificate of exemption:* The owner of an exempt lot shall not be required to apply for a tree permit, provided however, that an owner of an exempt lot who seeks an exterior work permit must certify to the tree warden on form(s) provided by the tree warden, that as of the date on the form(s) the lot qualifies as an

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

exempt lot and will remain an exempt lot for eighteen months following tree removal. There shall be no fee for filing a certificate of exemption.

(1) The tree warden shall determine whether a property is an occupied lot for the purposes of establishing exempt lot status. The property owner shall, if requested by the tree warden provide proof of ownership as well as a written statement confirming ownership and that a person or persons are living in the property.

(2) If lot ownership changes during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) on an exempt lot, the new owner must apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed. If, However, a change of ownership occurs on a lot for which an extension of exempt lot status for non-occupancy during construction has been issued within the eighteen months prior to the change in ownership, the person issued such extension shall apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed.

(d) *Extension of exempted lot status:* If at any point during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) the property is no longer an occupied lot, the current owner of the lot must apply for a tree permit. If the non-occupancy is due to legally permitted construction, the tree warden may grant an extension of exempt lot status for the duration of the construction, provided:

(1) The owner intends to own the lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued; and

(2) The property remains an occupied lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued.

(3) Upon request of an applicant for exempt lot status extension, the tree warden may also waive the requirement that the lot be continuously owned by the same owner for ninety (90) days prior to protected tree removal provided the owner intends to own the lot for twenty-one months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension is granted..

(4) If at any time during the applicable eighteen or twenty-one month period the lot ownership changes or the lot is not occupied, the tree warden shall revoke the tree permit and exempt lot status extension. The person issued the extension shall file a new tree permit application and shall replace any protected trees that were removed.

(5) Any person issued an extension of exempt lot status must report to the tree warden any change of ownership and any change of occupancy status within fifteen (15) days of the change if that change takes place during the applicable eighteen (18) month or twenty-one (21) month period following the date the certificate of occupancy issued.

Sec. 21-83. Permit application.

(a) *Contents, fee:* An application for a tree permit shall be submitted to the tree warden. The application for a tree permit shall be accompanied by a fee in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) The shape and dimensions of the parcel of real property to be developed, together with the existing and proposed locations of structures and improvements, if any;

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

- (2) A tree plan showing the location, type and size of each protected tree indicating which protected tree(s) are to be removed, and the location, type and size of replacement trees;
- (3) The proposed relocation of any existing protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree is to be relocated and maintained;
- (4) The location of existing and proposed underground or overhead utility services, existing and proposed roadways, bikeways, walkways and parking areas;
- (5) Any proposed grade changes which might adversely affect or endanger any protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree shall be protected and maintained;
- (6) The proposed method of protecting the remaining protected trees during the course of the construction.

(b) *Review of permit applications:* The tree warden shall review applications for tree permits in accordance with the provisions of this article. The tree warden shall date stamp or otherwise record the date of filing of each application for a tree permit. The tree warden shall complete the review of each tree permit application no later than ten (10) business days after the submission of a completed application to the tree warden and shall report to the commissioner of inspectional services within ten (10) business days of a request with respect to any tree permit application submitted in connection with a building permit as to whether said tree permit has been granted or denied. If no such report is received by the commissioner within the above-stated time period, he shall accept an application for a building permit without receipt of such report.

(c) *Standards for grant or denial:* No tree permit shall be issued unless one of the following conditions exists:

- (1) The protected tree will be relocated or replaced on site.
- (2) The protected tree will be replaced by payment in lieu of planting replacement trees as outlined in section 21-86.
- (3) The protected tree is interfering with existing structures, utilities, streets, sidewalks or other existing improvements
- (4) The protected tree is dead, diseased, injured, in danger of falling, dangerously close to existing structures, is causing disruption of public utility service, is causing drainage or passage problems upon rights-of-way, or poses a threat to pedestrian or vehicular safety.
- (5) The removal of the protected tree is necessary and desirable in order to enhance or benefit the health or condition of other trees on the same site as certified to the tree warden by a certified arborist.
- (6) No protected tree(s) are to be removed from the site and appropriate tree protection measures will be in place where necessary as determined by the tree warden.

(d) *Conditions:* Upon the issuance of a tree permit, the tree warden may prescribe in writing such protective measures for existing protected trees as he deems necessary. Before site disturbance may begin, the tree warden may make a determination that the prescribed protective measures have been adequately provided.

(e) *Construction:* Except as provided in a tree permit, construction activities under the drip line of a protected tree are prohibited. Activities include, but are not limited to, trenching or grading, storage of materials or

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

equipment, passage of heavy equipment within the drip line and spillage of chemicals or other materials, which are damaging to trees.

(f) *Suspension or revocation:* A tree permit may be suspended or revoked at any time by the tree warden upon written notice to the permit holder that the permit holder has failed to comply with either this article or the conditions of the permit. The written notice shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery and shall provide an opportunity for the permit holder to correct the noncompliance and apply for a renewal of the tree permit upon compliance, where practicable. The suspension or revocation of a tree permit in accordance with this subsection shall not affect the validity of a building permit issued in reliance upon the issuance (granting) of such tree permit nor shall such suspension or revocation be cause for withholding the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

(g) *Appeal:* Any person aggrieved by a decision of the tree warden may file an appeal with the mayor or his designee. Said appeal must be in writing and must be received by the mayor or his designee within five (5) business days of issuance of the tree warden's decision. Upon receipt of such appeal, the mayor or his designee shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. The mayor or his designee shall make a final decision on the matter within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the appeal. The mayor or his designee shall include in the decision the rationale therefor. Upon issuance of the final decision, the mayor or his designee shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each ward alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. There shall be no further appeal of the matter decided by the mayor or his designee. No protected trees shall be removed while an appeal is pending. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Ord. No. X-202, 04-03-06; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-33)

Sec. 21-84. Activities not requiring a permit.

(a) *Pruning:* A permit is not required for the pruning of protected trees. However, in order to prevent excessive pruning and topping of trees and to prevent pruning that will be hazardous to the health and natural appearance of the tree, compliance with approved pruning standards is required, and failure to meet these standards is a violation of this article. The tree warden shall maintain on file at all times a copy of the current edition the Tree Manual and shall make copies of the Tree Manual available for the cost of reproduction upon request.

(b) *Emergencies:* If any protected tree shall be determined to be in a hazardous condition so as to immediately endanger the public health, safety or welfare or cause an immediate disruption of public services and require immediate removal without delay, oral authorization may be given by the tree warden to remove such tree, utilizing such professional criteria and technical assistance as he deems necessary, and the protected tree may be removed without obtaining a written permit as otherwise required by this article. The tree warden shall memorialize in writing each such oral authorization to remove a tree and keep a record of the same.

(c) *Waiver:* The requirements of this article may be waived by the tree warden during the period of an emergency such as a tornado, windstorm, flood or other act of God. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-34)

Sec. 21-85. Tree replacement.

(a) *Required:* A protected tree shall be replaced in the manner provided in subsection (b) hereof in each instance in which a protected tree was removed from land subject to the provisions of section 21-82 without a tree permit.

(b) *Standards:* A person who has removed a protected tree and is required to replace such tree pursuant to subsection (a) hereof or as a condition of granting a tree permit in accordance with section 21-83, shall replace such tree within eighteen (18) months, or prior to transfer of property ownership whichever comes first from the date the tree permit is issued and in accordance with the following standards:

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

- (1) A replacement tree shall be of the same or similar species or such other species as deemed advisable by the tree warden in accordance with the Tree Manual and shall have the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches as that of the protected tree that has been removed.
- (2) In the event that a tree of the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches cannot be planted, then multiple smaller replacement trees may be planted provided that, wherever practicable, as determined by the tree warden, the total DBH of the replacement trees shall, when added together, equal the total DBH of the protected tree that has been removed. The tree warden may specify that replacement trees be of a minimum caliper when consistent with current accepted practice as stated in the Tree Manual.
- (3) A replacement tree shall be required to survive for a minimum of one eighteen (18) months from the date it is planted. The person planting the tree shall provide documentation as to the date of planting and file the same with the tree warden within fifteen (15) days of the planting of said replacement tree.
- (4) A replacement tree shall be planted on the same lot from which the tree was removed.. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-35)

Sec. 21-86. Tree replacement fund.

(a) *Established:* There is hereby established a tree replacement fund which shall be held in a separate identifiable account and administered in accordance with applicable provisions of the General Laws. Any payments into the tree replacement fund required by this article shall be deposited in the tree replacement fund and shall be used in accordance with subsection (c) hereof.

(b) *Payment in lieu of planting replacement tree(s):* In lieu of planting a replacement tree as provided in section 21-85, a person who has been granted a tree permit may make a contribution to a tree replacement fund in an amount equal to the cost to replace the tree in accordance with the provisions of section 21-85, which cost shall be determined by the tree warden based on the City's current cost to purchase and install trees.

(c) *Maintenance of tree replacement fund:* The tree replacement fund shall be maintained in a separate account in accordance with state law. All sums deposited into such fund shall be used solely for the purpose of buying, planting and maintaining trees in the city. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-36)

Sec. 21-87 Rule and regulations. The tree warden is authorized to promulgate reasonable rules and regulations to implement administration of sections 21-80 through 21-90.

Sec. 21-88. Enforcement.

(a) *Notice of violation:* Any person who violates any of the provisions of this article shall be notified by the tree warden of the specific violation by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. The notice shall set forth the nature of the violation and a reasonable time period within which compliance must be had. The tree warden shall send notice of violation of section 21-86), which notice shall include the date by which trees were to be replaced or payment was to be made for purposes of computing the "per day" violation fine, as provided in section 21-89.

(b) *Stop work order:*

- (1) Upon notice from the tree warden that work on any protected tree, or lot on which a protected tree is located, is being performed contrary to the provisions of this article, such work shall be immediately

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

stopped. The stop work order shall be in writing and shall be given to the owner of the property involved, or to the owner's agent, or to the person doing the work; and shall state the conditions under which work will be permitted to resume.

- (2) The tree warden is also authorized to request the agency which has granted an exterior work permit to order, to the extent permissible by law, that the owner cease any activity pursuant to the exterior work permit that might affect such protected tree while a stop work order is pending.
- (3) Any person who shall continue any work in or about the protected tree or lot on which a protected tree is located after having been served with a stop work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove a violation or unsafe condition, shall be liable to a fine of not more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for each such violation. Each day during which a violation exists shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Injunctive relief:*

- (1) Whenever there exists reasonable cause to believe that a person is violating this article or any standards adopted pursuant to this article or any term, condition or provision of an approved tree permit, the city may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this article, institute a civil action in the name of the city for a mandatory or prohibitory injunction and an order of abatement demanding the defendant to correct the unlawful condition upon or cease the unlawful use of the property.
- (2) Upon determination of a court that an alleged violation is occurring, it shall enter such order or judgment as is necessary to abate the violation. The institution of an action for injunctive relief under this subsection shall not relieve any party to such proceedings from any civil penalty prescribed for violation of this article. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-37)

Sec. 21-89. Penalties.

(a) *Removal without a permit:* Each instance in which a protected tree is removed without a permit shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00).

(b) *Failure to replace trees or make payment:* Each failure to replace a tree or make a payment into the tree replacement fund shall constitute a separate violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order:* Each instance where there is a failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(d) *City trees:* Nothing herein shall be construed to require the city to make a payment into the tree replacement fund for any tree(s) which it removes. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-38)

Sec. 21-90. Severability, effect on other laws.

(a) *Severability:* The provisions of this article are severable. If any section, provision, or portion of this article is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the remaining provisions of this article shall continue to be valid.

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

(b) *Conflict of laws*: This article shall not apply to any public shade tree as that term is defined by the General Laws, Chapter 87 or any amendments thereto. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with the General Laws, Chapter 87 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said Chapter 87, such provision shall not be valid. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with existing special permit procedures as provided in section 30-24 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said special permit procedures, such provision shall not be valid. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-39)

#397-13 DRAFT 5/1/2014

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ORDINANCE NO.

May , 2014

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF NEWTON AS FOLLOWS:

That the Revised Ordinances of Newton, Massachusetts, 2012, as amended, be and are hereby further amended with respect to **Div. 3 of Article III of Chapter 21** follows:

- 1. Delete the provisions of Sections 21-81 through 21-89; and delete the declaration of legislative findings and intent contained in Ordinance V 275 on file in the records of the board of aldermen, and insert in place thereof the following language:**

DIVISION 3. TREE PRESERVATION

Sec. 21-80 Findings, intent, and purpose.

The board of aldermen has determined that many trees are being lost without replacement incident to demolition of existing buildings in order to construct new buildings and lot clearing in connection with the construction of new buildings on previously undeveloped land. The Board has further determined that trees have been lost, severely damaged or disfigured through excessive or improper pruning or other than natural causes. The result is a net loss of the tree population in the city. The board has further determined that the city has insufficient legal vehicles to assure that such development adequately preserves, protects and provides for replacement of trees.

The preservation of the private tree canopy and the planting of replacement trees is intended to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the city; to preserve the character of the wooded and natural areas; to reduce energy consumption; to protect air quality; to baffle noise; to preserve and enhance habitat for wildlife; to reduce topsoil erosion and storm water runoff; to protect and increase property values; and to enhance the overall appearance of the city.

Sec. 21-81. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Aggregate diameter: The combined diameter of a multiple trunk tree measured at breast height.

Building: The term "building" shall be as defined in section 30-1.

Certified arborist: An arborist certified by the Massachusetts Arborists Association or International Society of Arboriculture, or any successor organization.

Diameter breast height (DBH): The diameter of the trunk of a tree 4½ feet above the existing grade at the base of the tree.

Drip line: A vertical line running through the outermost portion of the crown of a tree and extending to the ground.

Exempt lot: A lot which meets all of the following criteria:

1. The lot is occupied and used primarily as a dwelling for up to four families at the time any protected tree(s) are removed.
2. The lot owner at the time of protected tree removal has owned the lot continuously for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the removal of any protected tree(s).
3. The existing structure on the lot remains occupied as a dwelling with a person or persons living in it for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.
4. The lot remains owned by the same person for eighteen consecutive months from the date any protected tree(s) are removed.

Exterior work permit: A permit or approval which is required in order to perform work on a vacant lot or to the exterior of a building on a lot, including, but not limited to the following: a building permit; a review of an alteration of contour of land if required pursuant to section 30-5(c)(1); curb cut and street opening permits; an order of conditions; certificates of appropriateness, nonapplicability, or hardship; a demolition permit pursuant to section 22-44; site plan approval pursuant to section 30-23; subdivision approval; a special permit pursuant to section 30-24; a comprehensive permit.

Occupied Lot: A lot containing a legally constructed, permanent structure, used primarily as a dwelling that is currently being legally occupied and lived in and used as a residence by a person or persons. The dwelling must have a functioning, legally permitted, permanent water service, permanent sanitary service, and permanent electrical service.

Person: Any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company or organization of any kind including, but not limited to, the person removing a protected tree as well as the owner of the real property from which the tree is removed. The definition of "person" shall not include the City of Newton.

Protected tree: Any tree having a diameter of eight inches (8") DBH or larger or having an aggregate diameter of fifteen inches (15") DBH or larger and which is located on land subject to the provisions of section 20-32.

Pruning standards: Standards for pruning as defined in the City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995 and any future amendments or revisions to the same.

Remove (including removing and removal): The cutting down of any protected tree and all other acts which cause the actual removal or the effective removal through damaging, poisoning or other direct or indirect actions resulting in the death of a protected tree, including, but not limited to, excessive or improper pruning.

Tree Manual: The City of Newton Tree Management Manual, 1995, and any future amendments and revisions to the same. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99)

Tree Warden: The commissioner of parks and recreation or his designee. (Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-31)

Sec. 21-82. Applicability, permit or certificate of exemption required.

(a) *Applicability:* The terms and provisions of this article shall apply to any protected tree located on land within the city not owned by the city, the commonwealth, or any independent authority of the commonwealth, or by the federal government except protected tree(s) located on an exempt lot pursuant to paragraphs (c) and (d) below.

(b) *Permit, certificate of exemption:* No person shall remove a protected tree on a non-exempt lot located on land subject to the provisions of this article, or commence legally permitted exterior work on any lot without first obtaining a tree permit or a certificate of exemption from the tree warden. Applications shall be made in writing on forms specified by the tree warden.

(c) *Exempt lot, certificate of exemption:* The owner of an exempt lot shall not be required to apply for a tree permit, provided however, that an owner of an exempt lot who seeks an exterior work permit must certify to the tree warden on form(s) provided by the tree warden, that as of the date on the form(s) the lot qualifies as an exempt lot and will remain an exempt lot for eighteen months following tree removal. There shall be no fee for filing a certificate of exemption.

(1) The tree warden shall determine whether a property is an occupied lot for the purposes of establishing exempt lot status. The property owner shall, if requested by the tree warden provide proof of ownership as well as a written statement confirming ownership and that a person or persons are living in the property.

(2) If lot ownership changes during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) on an exempt lot, the new owner must apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed. If, However, a change of ownership occurs on a lot for which an extension of exempt lot

status for non-occupancy during construction has been issued within the eighteen months prior to the change in ownership, the person issued such extension shall apply for a tree permit and shall be required to replace any protected tree(s) that were removed.

(d) *Extension of exempted lot status:* If at any point during the eighteen consecutive months following the removal of any protected tree(s) the property is no longer an occupied lot, the current owner of the lot must apply for a tree permit. If the non-occupancy is due to legally permitted construction, the tree warden may grant an extension of exempt lot status for the duration of the construction, provided:

(1) The owner intends to own the lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued; and

(2) The property remains an occupied lot for eighteen consecutive months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension was issued.

(3) Upon request of an applicant for exempt lot status extension, the tree warden may also waive the requirement that the lot be continuously owned by the same owner for ninety (90) days prior to protected tree removal provided the owner intends to own the lot for twenty-one months from the date a certificate of occupancy is issued for the construction for which the extension is granted..

(4) If at any time during the applicable eighteen or twenty-one month period the lot ownership changes or the lot is not occupied, the tree warden shall revoke the tree permit and exempt lot status extension. The person issued the extension shall file a new tree permit application and shall replace any protected trees that were removed.

(5) Any person issued an extension of exempt lot status must report to the tree warden any change of ownership and any change of occupancy status within fifteen (15) days of the change if that change takes place during the applicable eighteen (18) month or twenty-one (21) month period following the date the certificate of occupancy issued.

Sec. 21-83. Permit application.

(a) *Contents, fee:* An application for a tree permit shall be submitted to the tree warden. The application for a tree permit shall be accompanied by a fee in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) The shape and dimensions of the parcel of real property to be developed, together with the existing and proposed locations of structures and improvements, if any;

(2) A tree plan showing the location, type and size of each protected tree indicating which protected tree(s) are to be removed, and the location, type and size of replacement trees;

(3) The proposed relocation of any existing protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree is to be relocated and maintained;

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

- (4) The location of existing and proposed underground or overhead utility services, existing and proposed roadways, bikeways, walkways and parking areas;
- (5) Any proposed grade changes which might adversely affect or endanger any protected tree with a statement prepared by a certified arborist explaining how each such protected tree shall be protected and maintained;
- (6) The proposed method of protecting the remaining protected trees during the course of the construction.

(b) *Review of permit applications:* The tree warden shall review applications for tree permits in accordance with the provisions of this article. The tree warden shall date stamp or otherwise record the date of filing of each application for a tree permit. The tree warden shall complete the review of each tree permit application no later than ten (10) business days after the submission of a completed application to the tree warden and shall report to the commissioner of inspectional services within ten (10) business days of a request with respect to any tree permit application submitted in connection with a building permit as to whether said tree permit has been granted or denied. If no such report is received by the commissioner within the above-stated time period, he shall accept an application for a building permit without receipt of such report.

(c) *Standards for grant or denial:* No tree permit shall be issued unless one of the following conditions exists:

- (1) The protected tree will be relocated or replaced on site.
- (2) The protected tree will be replaced by payment in lieu of planting replacement trees as outlined in section 21-86.
- (3) The protected tree is interfering with existing structures, utilities, streets, sidewalks or other existing improvements
- (4) The protected tree is dead, diseased, injured, in danger of falling, dangerously close to existing structures, is causing disruption of public utility service, is causing drainage or passage problems upon rights-of-way, or poses a threat to pedestrian or vehicular safety.
- (5) The removal of the protected tree is necessary and desirable in order to enhance or benefit the health or condition of other trees on the same site as certified to the tree warden by a certified arborist.
- (6) No protected tree(s) are to be removed from the site and appropriate tree protection measures will be in place where necessary as determined by the tree warden.

(d) *Conditions:* Upon the issuance of a tree permit, the tree warden may prescribe in writing such protective measures for existing protected trees as he deems necessary. Before site disturbance may begin, the tree warden may make a determination that the prescribed protective measures have been adequately provided.

(e) *Construction:* Except as provided in a tree permit, construction activities under the drip line of a protected tree are prohibited. Activities include, but are not limited to, trenching or grading, storage of materials or equipment, passage of heavy equipment within the drip line and spillage of chemicals or other materials, which are damaging to trees.

(f) *Suspension or revocation:* A tree permit may be suspended or revoked at any time by the tree warden upon written notice to the permit holder that the permit holder has failed to comply with either this article or the conditions of the permit. The written notice shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery and shall provide an opportunity for the permit holder to correct the noncompliance and apply for a renewal of the tree permit upon compliance, where practicable. The suspension or revocation of a tree permit in accordance with this subsection shall not affect the validity of a building permit issued in reliance upon the issuance (granting) of such tree permit nor shall such suspension or revocation be cause for withholding the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

(g) *Appeal:* Any person aggrieved by a decision of the tree warden may file an appeal with the mayor or his designee. Said appeal must be in writing and must be received by the mayor or his designee within five (5) business days of issuance of the tree warden's decision. Upon receipt of such appeal, the mayor or his designee shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. The mayor or his designee shall make a final decision on the matter within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the appeal. The mayor or his designee shall include in the decision the rationale therefor. Upon issuance of the final decision, the mayor or his designee shall provide a copy to the clerk of the board of aldermen and to each ward alderman for the ward in which the trees are located. There shall be no further appeal of the matter decided by the mayor or his designee. No protected trees shall be removed while an appeal is pending. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Ord. No. X-202, 04-03-06; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-33)

Sec. 21-84. Activities not requiring a permit.

(a) *Pruning:* A permit is not required for the pruning of protected trees. However, in order to prevent excessive pruning and topping of trees and to prevent pruning that will be hazardous to the health and natural appearance of the tree, compliance with approved pruning standards is required, and failure to meet these standards is a violation of this article. The tree warden shall maintain on file at all times a copy of the current edition the Tree Manual and shall make copies of the Tree Manual available for the cost of reproduction upon request.

(b) *Emergencies:* If any protected tree shall be determined to be in a hazardous condition so as to immediately endanger the public health, safety or welfare or cause an immediate disruption of public services and require immediate removal without delay, oral authorization may be given by the tree warden to remove such tree, utilizing such professional criteria and technical assistance as he deems necessary, and the protected tree may be removed without obtaining a written permit as otherwise required by this article. The tree warden shall memorialize in writing each such oral authorization to remove a tree and keep a record of the same.

(c) *Waiver:* The requirements of this article may be waived by the tree warden during the period of an emergency such as a tornado, windstorm, flood or other act of God. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-34)

Sec. 21-85. Tree replacement.

(a) *Required:* A protected tree shall be replaced in the manner provided in subsection (b) hereof in each instance in which a protected tree was removed from land subject to the provisions of section 21-82 without a tree permit.

(b) *Standards:* A person who has removed a protected tree and is required to replace such tree pursuant to subsection (a) hereof or as a condition of granting a tree permit in accordance with section 21-83, shall replace such tree within eighteen (18) months, or prior to transfer of property ownership whichever comes first from the date the tree permit is issued and in accordance with the following standards:

- (1) A replacement tree shall be of the same or similar species or such other species as deemed advisable by the tree warden in accordance with the Tree Manual and shall have the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches as that of the protected tree that has been removed.
- (2) In the event that a tree of the same or equivalent size as measured in DBH inches cannot be planted, then multiple smaller replacement trees may be planted provided that, wherever practicable, as determined by the tree warden, the total DBH of the replacement trees shall, when added together, equal the total DBH of the protected tree that has been removed. The tree warden may specify that replacement trees be of a minimum caliper when consistent with current accepted practice as stated in the Tree Manual.
- (3) A replacement tree shall be required to survive for a minimum of one eighteen (18) months from the date it is planted. The person planting the tree shall provide documentation as to the date of planting and file the same with the tree warden within fifteen (15) days of the planting of said replacement tree.
- (4) A replacement tree shall be planted on the same lot from which the tree was removed.. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-35)

Sec. 21-86. Tree replacement fund.

(a) *Established:* There is hereby established a tree replacement fund which shall be held in a separate identifiable account and administered in accordance with applicable provisions of the General Laws. Any payments into the tree replacement fund required by this article shall be deposited in the tree replacement fund and shall be used in accordance with subsection (c) hereof.

(b) *Payment in lieu of planting replacement tree(s):* In lieu of planting a replacement tree as provided in section 21-85, a person who has been granted a tree permit may make a contribution to a tree replacement fund in an amount equal to the cost to replace the tree in accordance with the provisions of section 21-85, which cost shall be determined by the tree warden based on the City's current cost to purchase and install trees.

(c) *Maintenance of tree replacement fund:* The tree replacement fund shall be maintained in a separate account in accordance with state law. All sums deposited into such fund shall be used solely for the purpose of buying, planting and maintaining trees in the city. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-36)

Sec. 21-87. Rule and regulations.

The tree warden is authorized to promulgate reasonable rules and regulations to implement administration of sections 21-80 through 21-90.

Sec. 21-88. Enforcement.

LANGUAGE APPROVED AT 4-30-14 PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

(a) *Notice of violation:* Any person who violates any of the provisions of this article shall be notified by the tree warden of the specific violation by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. The notice shall set forth the nature of the violation and a reasonable time period within which compliance must be had. The tree warden shall send notice of violation of section 21-86), which notice shall include the date by which trees were to be replaced or payment was to be made for purposes of computing the "per day" violation fine, as provided in section 21-89.

(b) *Stop work order:*

- (1) Upon notice from the tree warden that work on any protected tree, or lot on which a protected tree is located, is being performed contrary to the provisions of this article, such work shall be immediately stopped. The stop work order shall be in writing and shall be given to the owner of the property involved, or to the owner's agent, or to the person doing the work; and shall state the conditions under which work will be permitted to resume.
- (2) The tree warden is also authorized to request the agency which has granted an exterior work permit to order, to the extent permissible by law, that the owner cease any activity pursuant to the exterior work permit that might affect such protected tree while a stop work order is pending.
- (3) Any person who shall continue any work in or about the protected tree or lot on which a protected tree is located after having been served with a stop work order, except such work as that person is directed to perform to remove a violation or unsafe condition, shall be liable to a fine of not more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00) for each such violation. Each day during which a violation exists shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Injunctive relief:*

- (1) Whenever there exists reasonable cause to believe that a person is violating this article or any standards adopted pursuant to this article or any term, condition or provision of an approved tree permit, the city may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this article, institute a civil action in the name of the city for a mandatory or prohibitory injunction and an order of abatement demanding the defendant to correct the unlawful condition upon or cease the unlawful use of the property.
- (2) Upon determination of a court that an alleged violation is occurring, it shall enter such order or judgment as is necessary to abate the violation. The institution of an action for injunctive relief under this subsection shall not relieve any party to such proceedings from any civil penalty prescribed for violation of this article. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-37)

Sec. 21-89. Penalties.

(a) *Removal without a permit:* Each instance in which a protected tree is removed without a permit shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00).

(b) *Failure to replace trees or make payment:* Each failure to replace a tree or make a payment into the tree replacement fund shall constitute a separate violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) *Failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order:* Each instance where there is a failure to comply with a condition contained in a tree permit or stop work order shall constitute a violation of this article which shall be subject to a fine in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(d) *City trees:* Nothing herein shall be construed to require the city to make a payment into the tree replacement fund for any tree(s) which it removes. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-38)

Sec. 21-90. Severability, effect on other laws.

(a) *Severability:* The provisions of this article are severable. If any section, provision, or portion of this article is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the remaining provisions of this article shall continue to be valid.

(b) *Conflict of laws:* This article shall not apply to any public shade tree as that term is defined by the General Laws, Chapter 87 or any amendments thereto. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with the General Laws, Chapter 87 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said Chapter 87, such provision shall not be valid. Nothing herein is intended to conflict with existing special permit procedures as provided in section 30-24 and to the extent that any provision hereof conflicts with said special permit procedures, such provision shall not be valid. (Ord. No. V-275, 12-6-99; Rev. Ord. 2007, § 20-39)

2. Delete the reserved section line at the end of Division 2 and insert in its place the following language:

Secs. 21-73 – 21-79. Reserved.

Approved as to legal form and character:

DONNALYN B. LYNCH KAHN
City Solicitor

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Adopted

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Approved:

(SGD) DAVID A. OLSON
City Clerk

(SGD) SETTI D. WARREN
Mayor