

## Chapter 21

### **PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC GROUNDS\***

**Art. I. In General, §§ 21-1—21-45**

**Art. II. Parks and Recreation Commission, §§ 21-46—21-47**

**Art. III. Urban Tree Commission §§ 21-60 — 21-70**

#### **ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL**

##### **Sec. 21-1. Parks and recreation commissioner —Designation; duties generally; compensation.**

(a) The office of commissioner of parks and recreation and the department of parks and recreation are established. The commissioner shall be an officer of the city and the provisions of the law for the appointment and removal of heads of departments shall be applicable to such office. He shall have under his immediate control and direction such assistants and employees as may from time to time be duly authorized. The commissioner shall consult with the Director of the history museum regarding the manner of maintenance, care and management of the burial grounds. He shall receive for his services such salary as shall be fixed by the mayor and board of aldermen.

(b) The parks and recreation commissioner shall have charge of maintenance, care and management of playgrounds and all recreation lands, except to the extent conferred upon the Parks and Recreation Commission, pursuant to Chapter 426 of the Acts of 1982 and G.L. c. 45. He shall have and exercise the power conferred by G. L. c. 45, sec. 14, except that of taking by eminent domain. He shall also be responsible for the control and supervision of the parks and recreation department. The commissioner also shall have charge of the maintenance, care and management of burial grounds and the grounds about public buildings and the maintenance of lands under the jurisdiction and control of the conservation commission. The commissioner shall consult with the conservation commission regarding the manner of maintaining lands under the commission's jurisdiction.

(c) The parks and recreation commissioner shall also be designated as the local superintendent of insect pest control pursuant to the G.L. c. 132, sec. 13. He shall perform the duties of tree warden and have the care and control of all public shade trees and the planting, trimming and cutting thereof. He shall make and keep an itemized account with vouchers, showing the definite amounts expended for the purposes named in the General Laws for the suppression of insects. He shall, under the direction of the mayor, cause notices as required by the statutes to be sent to owners of parcels of land infested with such insects. He shall make lists of the amounts expended on spraying as provided by law, containing the names of the owners of estates, the locations thereof and the amounts expended thereon. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-125, § 19-39; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75; Ord. No. 190, 12-20-76; Ord. No. 220, 6-7-77; Ord. No. 233, 8-15-77; Ord. No. 317, 2-20-79; Ord. No. R- 267, 10-18-82; Ord. No. T-318, 12-6-93; Ord. No. V-289, 3-20-00)

**State law references**—Office of tree warden, G.L. c. 41, § 1; statements of expenditures of local superintendents of pest control, G.L. c. 132, § 15

##### **Sec. 21-2. Same—Authority over school property.**

(a) The parks and recreation commissioner shall have charge of the management, care and maintenance of the city's school yards and school grounds. No layout of a school yard or school ground shall be made by the parks and recreation commissioner until the plan and design of the same has received the written approval of the school committee.

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\* **Cross references** – Cultural affairs committee, Ch. 2, Art. VI, Div. 3

**State law reference**—Parks and playgrounds generally, G.L. c. 45

(b) Control of the use of school yards and school grounds shall be entirely within the jurisdiction of the school committee which shall determine the persons entitled to use the grounds and how the same shall be used. The school committee may, however, during vacation periods of the school, turn over the control of the use of designated school yards and school grounds to the parks and recreation commissioner and it may turn over the control of the use of any designated portion of such ground during the school year to the parks and recreation commissioner. The release of jurisdiction provided for in this section shall only be accomplished if and when the parks and recreation commissioner in writing applies for and the school committee in writing authorizes the same. In the event of such turning over of jurisdiction, the adjoining school building and the equipment of the school department shall only be used under such regulations as to use as the school committee makes. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-270; Ord. No. 190, 12-20-76; Ord. No. 220, 6-6-77; Ord. No. R-267, 10-18-82)

**Cross reference**—Newton community education program, Ch. 2, Art. VI, Div. 2

**Sec. 21-3. Operation of vehicles.**

No person, unless by permission of the commissioner of public works or, on parks and playgrounds, of the parks and recreation commissioner, shall operate a motor vehicle in or upon parks or other public grounds except upon the driveways thereof. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-102; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75)

**Sec. 21-4. Selling goods and wares; amusement tents, booths, etc.**

No person, except by permission of the commissioner of public works, or, on parks and playgrounds, of the parks and recreation commissioner, shall expose for sale or sell any goods, wares or merchandise in or upon any park or other public grounds, nor erect or maintain a booth, stand, tent or apparatus of any kind for the purpose of amusement or show in any park or on public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-103; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75)

**Cross reference**—Licensing and permits generally, Ch. 17

**Sec. 21-5. Nuisances generally.**

No person shall commit a nuisance in parks or on other public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-104; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75)

**Sec. 21-6. Playing games, etc.**

No person, except by the permission of the commissioner of public works, or, on parks and playgrounds, of the parks and recreation commissioner, shall engage in a game of ball, football, baseball or other athletic sports in or upon any park or public grounds, except upon such portions thereof as may be set apart for such purposes. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-105)

**Sec. 21-7. Throwing missiles.**

No person shall throw a stone, snowball or other missile in or upon any park or public playground. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-106; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75)

**Sec. 21-8. Damaging property.**

No person shall pull up, break, cut or deface any of the seats, fences or railings upon or around any park or other public grounds, nor deface any monument or statue in any park or on public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-107)

**Sec. 21-9. Climbing, posting bills on trees.**

No person shall climb a tree in any park or upon other public grounds, nor post a bill, nor place a sign upon or around any tree in any park or upon other public grounds of the city. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-108)

**Sec. 21-10. Digging, carrying dirt, etc.**

No person, except by permission of the commissioner of public works, or, on parks and playgrounds, of the parks and recreation commissioner, and for some public use, shall dig or carry away any sward, gravel, sand, turf or earth from, nor place or deposit or cause to be placed or deposited any stones, sand, gravel or other substance upon, any park, playground or other public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-109; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75)

**Sec. 21-11. Damaging flowers.**

No person shall walk, stand, sit or lie down in or upon, or pull a flower or plant out of a flower bed, in any park or upon public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-110)

**Sec. 21-12. Walking on grass.**

No person shall stand, walk or lie upon the grass in any park or upon public grounds where such walking, standing or lying has been prohibited, and notice of such prohibition is given to the public by legible notices placed in or upon such park or public grounds. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 19-111)

**Sec. 21-13. City-owned burial grounds.**

No further burials are to be permitted in that portion of the City-owned burial ground located on Centre Street, said portion being bounded on the west side by Centre Street and Loring Park, on the south side by Cotton Street, on the east by the land of the Franciscan Sisters, and on the north by a driveway, as more specifically shown on a plan entitled "Plan of Centre Street Cemetery, January 1901; Amended 1918", on file in the engineering division of the department of public works. (Ord. No. R-251, 6-21-82; Ord. No. V-289, 3-20-00)

**Sec. 21-14. Spraying for insects.**

(a) The commissioner of parks and recreation may, at the request of owners of private property in the city, spray trees and shrubs thereon for the purpose of destroying or suppressing insects or pests and preventing or controlling the spread of Dutch Elm Disease. The commissioner of parks and recreation may establish rules and regulations governing such spraying, including the time and manner of making requests and payments therefor.

(b) There shall be charged for each such spraying an amount determined by the size of the lot upon which such spraying is done according to the following table:

Size of lot (square feet)	
Amount under 7,500 .....	\$ 5.00
7,500 to 9,999.....	7.50
10,000 to 14,999.....	10.00
15,000 to 19,999.....	12.50

20,000 to 24,999.....15.00

25,000 and over the cost of labor and materials employed for the purpose as estimated by the commissioner.

(c) The amount to be charged shall in each case be paid to the parks and recreation commissioner before the spraying is done. (Rev. Ord. 1973, § 2-129, § 19-44; Ord. No. 90, 10-6-75; Ord. No. R-267, 10-18-82)

**Sec. 21-15. Parks and recreation department; functions generally.**

The parks and recreation department shall be responsible for planning, scheduling, organizing and supervising programs for designated city groups and citizens. Under direction of the parks and recreation commissioner, it shall provide supervision and patrol activities at swimming ponds, swimming pools, skating areas, playgrounds and all other recreation areas; it shall also conduct all senior citizens recreation programs. (Rev. Ord. 1973, § 2-271; Ord. No. 190, 12-20-76; Ord. No. R-287, 1-19-83)

**Secs. 21-16—21-45. Reserved.**

**ARTICLE II. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Sec. 21-46. Composition; appointment of members; vacancies; chairman.**

(a) There shall be a parks and recreation commission comprised of eight (8) voting members together with the parks and recreation commissioner who shall serve, ex officio, as a non-voting member of the parks and recreation commission. One resident from each ward of the city shall be appointed as permanent members by the mayor with the approval of the board of aldermen. Four (4) alternate members selected at large shall also be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the board of aldermen.

(b) Appointments by the mayor shall strive to balance the concerns of parks and open space preservation with the concerns of recreation.

(c)(i) Permanent members of the parks and recreation commission shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years.

(ii) Four (4) alternate members shall be appointed by the mayor following the effective date of passage of this ordinance. The initial terms of three (3) of the alternate members shall be shortened as follows to stagger expiration of their terms: one member shall be appointed for one (1) year; two members shall be appointed for two (2) years; one member shall be appointed for three (3) years. All alternate member appointments subsequent to the initial appointments shall be for a term of three (3) years.

(iii) Both permanent and alternate members shall continue to serve after expiration of their terms until their successors shall be duly appointed and qualified. Vacancies in the offices of either permanent or alternate members shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for any unexpired term.

(d) The permanent members shall elect one member to act as chair. In the event that a permanent member is absent or unable to act for any reason, the chair shall designate an alternate member to act. (Rev. Ords. 1973, §2-267; Ord. No. R-287, 1-19-83; Ord. No. T-317, 12-6-93)

**Editor's note**—As amended in 1970, this section provided for the members of the former recreation commission whose terms had not expired to serve until December 31, 1970, as well as for the mayor to appoint additional members to serve until December 31, 1970. The section also provided for appointment of members, commencing January 1, 1971, for staggered terms of one, two (2) and three (3) years.

**Cross references**—Commissions generally, Ch. 2, Art. VII; regulations governing appointment to and service on commissions and committees, § 2-8

**State law reference**—Recreation commission for city of Newton, c. 631, Acts of 1969

**Sec. 21-47. Powers and duties.**

The parks and recreation commission shall advise the mayor and board of aldermen in relation to matters pertaining to sports, recreation, parks, open space and preservation of scenic beauty and shall render decisions concerning parks and recreation programs and the use of lands under its jurisdiction in accordance with written guidelines or policies. The guidelines or policies established by the parks and recreation commission shall preserve and enhance access to parks and recreation opportunities for Newton citizens. The parks and recreation commission shall also advise the mayor and board of aldermen as to the amount of money to be spent annually by the department of parks and recreation. Pursuant to Chapter 426 of the Acts of 1982, the parks and recreation commission shall have all the rights, powers, duties and obligations of a park commission as set forth in Chapter 45 of the General Laws, and shall exercise the powers of eminent domain conferred by Sections 2 and 14 of Chapter 45 of the General Laws.

Pursuant to Section 2 of Chapter 87 of the General Laws, the commission may delegate its powers as tree warden under Section 5 of Chapter 45 to the parks and recreation commissioner. (Rev. Ords. 1973, § 2-268; Ord. No. 190, 12-20-76; Ord. No. R-287, 1-19-83; Ord. No. T-317, 12-6-93)

**Secs. 21-48. —21-59. Reserved.**

**ARTICLE III. URBAN TREE COMMISSION**

**Sec. 21-60. Establishment and purpose.**

There is hereby established the urban tree commission to advise and assist the tree warden in carrying out his duties and responsibilities. The purpose of the urban tree commission shall be to advise the tree warden, the mayor, the board of aldermen and the general public on all matters concerning public trees, including but not limited to, the selection of trees for planting, planting and pruning of trees, the treatment of disease, and the preservation and regular maintenance of trees. (Ord. No. V-71, 3-4-96)

**Cross reference**—Tree warden, Ch. 21, Art. I, § 21-1

**Sec. 21-61. Powers and duties.**

(a) The commission shall issue a city tree maintenance manual which shall set forth the standards for planting and maintaining all public shade trees in the city and which shall also set forth the general policies in regard to those trees. The commission shall regularly revise and distribute the tree maintenance manual and review the implementation of the practices and policies it enunciates.

(b) The commission shall annually review the needs of various geographical areas of the city for the planting and replacement of trees and shall recommend priorities based on the annual review to the tree warden and superintendent of urban forestry or such other municipal officials as may hereafter be assigned the duties of tree warden and superintendent of urban forestry.

(c) Whenever a hearing is required to be held in regard to cutting down or removal of a tree, the commission may offer written recommendation(s) to the tree warden.

(d) Whenever the tree warden prepares an impact statement on the effect of any construction project on existing trees or the ability to plant trees in that area in the future, the tree commission may submit its advice as part of a submission to appropriate city agencies and/or to the board of aldermen for its review of the project. (Ord. No. V-71, 3-4-96)

**Sec. 21-62. Composition and organization.**

(a) The commission shall consist of twelve (12) voting members who shall serve for three year terms in accordance with Section 2-8 of these Revised Ordinances. Ten (10) members shall be appointed by the mayor in accordance with Section 3-3 of the Charter. The commissioner of parks and recreation, in his capacity as tree warden, or such other municipal official as may hereafter be assigned the duties of tree warden, shall serve, ex officio, as the eleventh voting member. The superintendent of urban forestry, or such other municipal official as may hereafter be assigned the duties of superintendent of urban forestry, shall serve, ex officio, as the twelfth voting member. Three (3) of the initial appointees shall serve for a term of one year; three (3) of the initial appointees shall serve for a term of two years; and four (4) of the initial appointees shall serve for a term of three years.

(b) Members of the commission, so far as practicable, shall be selected so as to provide representation of citizens with expertise or interest in the preservation and care of trees. Consistent with this requirement, whenever a vacancy occurs on the commission, the commission shall offer a list of prospective members for the mayor's consideration in making appointments.

In making the initial appointees to the urban tree commission, the board of aldermen requests that the mayor consider any active members of the urban tree task force who wish to be appointed, it being the will of the board of aldermen that the urban tree commission be established as the successor to the urban tree task force. The board of aldermen also requests that the mayor also consider appointing any such members of the urban tree task force to the longest terms of office available prior to appointing persons who are not currently serving on the urban tree task force. (Ord. No. V-71, 3-4-96)

**Secs. 21-63. —21-69. Reserved.**

**Sec. 21-70. Volunteer work on city property.**

(a) Improvements to and maintenance of real property owned or controlled by the City of Newton may be carried out by volunteer workers in accordance with a permit issued by the head of the department having care, custody or control of such real property, or his designee. Every such permit shall state the location, scope and nature of the project and any other limitations and requirements which, in the opinion of the department head, are necessary in order to carry out the city's policies for the use of such real property.

(b) Whenever such a permit has been issued, the head of the department shall provide city personnel who shall act as supervisors of the volunteer work on the improvement project. All persons serving as volunteer workers shall follow all instructions of and act under the supervision of the city personnel supervising such work.

(c) Volunteer workers who work on improvement and maintenance projects in accordance with such a permit shall be deemed to be "public employees" within the meaning of section one of chapter 258 of the Massachusetts General Laws for the purpose of third party claims; provided that any such claim arises as a result of the project described in the applicable permit.

(d) In order to facilitate the protection provided to volunteer workers pursuant to subsection (c), the head of the department shall keep a record of the names and addresses of every volunteer worker who works at the site of each such project; and every such volunteer worker shall provide his/her name and address for inclusion in such record. (Ord. No. V-96, 11-18-96)