

Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts
Select Board Policy Directive #MBP2012
Adopted: March 12, 2012
Revised: November 5, 2018

Policy Title: Acceptance and Placement of Memorial Benches or Trees on Town Property

A. GENERAL

This policy directive establishes a set of procedures for responding to requests for the placement of memorial benches or trees on Town-owned land. (Note: For purposes of this policy, memorial benches or trees are assumed to include the installation of a memorial plaque.)

B. OBJECTIVES

The reasons for having an established procedure are to:

1. Provide a clear and uniform method for reviewing requests to place memorial benches or trees on Town property;
2. Ensure that decisions involving such requests are well-considered and address the concerns and needs of the Town relative to maintenance costs, durability of materials, aesthetics, appropriateness of bench or tree location and type, and merit of the requested memorial; and
3. Allow for the placement of high-quality benches and trees at an economical cost to the donor and in the most efficient and cost-effective manner for the Town.

C. STANDARDS

When considering a request for the placement of a memorial bench or memorial tree on Town-owned land, the Select Board shall apply the following standards:

1. Acceptance and placement of a memorial bench or tree on Town-owned property shall be done sparingly, for good cause shown. At minimum, persons being memorialized shall have, at some point in their lives, held residency or participated in the community for over ten years.
2. Except as otherwise allowed by the Town Manager, all memorial benches shall be one of two types. Bench A, made of steel and cast iron, and similar to benches installed on Market Street, North Main Street, and on the Downtown Riverwalk, shall be used for downtown locations. Bench B, made of recycled wood materials, shall be used for beach, parks and other recreational locations. A rendering of each bench is provided in Attachments A and B.
3. All proposed memorial trees shall require review by the Shade & Beautification Committee and approval from the Town Forestry Division, to ensure the appropriateness of the species and its proposed location, as well as the sufficiency of the selected tree's size and condition. The tree shall be planted by an experienced landscaper under the supervision of the Forestry Division, or if circumstances permit, by Forestry personnel themselves. The final location of the tree requires approval of the Select Board.

4. Except as otherwise permitted by the Town Manager, memorial benches will be allowed only at the locations identified by a master list of existing and proposed benches on Town property. The master list shall be updated by the Cemetery & Parks Department at least annually.
5. Pursuant to this policy, donors may be authorized to do one of the following: (1) fund the installation of a new park bench or tree on Town property, at a location either identified on the master list (benches only) or determined to be acceptable by the Select Board; (2) fund the replacement of an existing park bench on Town property that is identified on the master list as needing replacement; or (3) fund the placement of a plaque on an existing Town-owned bench that is not in need of replacement.
6. All costs associated with the installation of a new or replacement memorial bench or the planting of a tree will be the responsibility of the private donor. For the placement of plaques on existing Town-owned benches that are not in need of replacement, the donor shall be required to pay the Town an amount equivalent to 100% of the cost of installing a new bench or replacing an existing one.
7. Memorial plaques placed on benches shall be no more than two inches (2") by eight inches (8") in size, and the text shall be limited to three lines, 20 characters per line. Plaques associated with memorial trees shall be located within eight feet of the tree, be no greater than one foot (1') by two foot (2') in size, made of bronze or granite, have a thickness of at least four inches, and be installed flush to the ground. The procedure for the plaque installation shall be the same as employed by the Cemetery and Parks for flush grave markers. The proposed wording on the plaque shall require approval of the Select Board prior to installation.

D. PROCEDURES

The procedure for requesting the placement of a memorial bench or tree on public property shall be as follows:

1. Requests for permission to install new or replacement memorial benches or plant memorial trees (or to place a memorial plaque on an existing bench) on Town-owned real property shall be directed to the Office of Cemetery and Parks.
2. Requestors shall be provided with a copy of this policy directive.
3. Before submitting a formal request for a memorial bench or tree, the requestor is encouraged to discuss the matter with the Cemetery and Parks Office.
4. All requests shall be made by completing the Memorial Bench/Tree Request Form (Attachment C) and submitting it to the Office of Cemetery and Parks.
5. Submitted request forms shall be forwarded by the Office of Cemetery and Parks to the Planning Office, Department of Public Works, and any other department(s) responsible for maintaining or operating the Town-owned land in question.
6. Town departments shall submit their comments and/or recommendations to the Office of Cemetery and Parks within 21 days of receipt.
7. The Office of Cemetery and Parks shall submit the completed request form to the Town Manager/Select Board, with a request that the Select Board take action on the request, subject to its recommended conditions, if any.

8. As a condition of the approval of a memorial bench or tree request, the Office of Cemetery & Parks shall require the requestor to submit a certified bank check (or other form of payment acceptable to the Town) in an amount equivalent to the cost of ordering the tree and/or manufacturing/buying the bench, plus the cost of installation.

9. Once a memorial bench or tree request has been approved by the Select Board, it shall be effectuated as follows:

- Donor shall submit payment to the Office of Cemetery and Parks as described in D.9. of this policy directive.
- Depending on the bench type approved by the Select Board, the Town will then either order the bench or construct the bench in conjunction with a manufacturer.
- The Town will install a memorial bench, supervise the planting of a memorial tree, or plant a memorial tree, when conditions and circumstances permit.

Attachment A - Bench A



Attachment B - Bench B



Attachment C

Town of Ipswich - Memorial Bench/Tree Request Form

Before submitting a request for a memorial bench or tree, please review the listing of possible bench locations and the types and costs of benches associated with that location.

To: Cemetery and Parks Department

From: _____
(Please provide full name, address, phone number, and email address)

Please provide information regarding your request of a memorial bench/tree:

Please state the exact language you would like to appear on the plaque:*

*The cost of the plaque is the responsibility of the donor. The plaque must comply with the Ipswich Select Board's policy for the acceptance and placement of memorial benches or trees.

Proposed Bench/Tree Location _____

Proposed Bench Type/Tree Species _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

For Town Use Only

Staff Input

1. Planning Department: _____ Date: _____

Remarks: _____

2. Department of Public Works: _____ Date: _____

Remarks: _____

3. Other: _____ Date: _____

Remarks: _____

Select Board Authorization Date: _____

Bench Installation or Tree Planting Date: _____