



TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM

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POLICY FOR THE INSTALLATION OF TRIBUTE BENCHES, AND TREES

I. Purpose

This policy is established to ensure a clear, thoughtful, consistent, and appropriate process of memorializing members of the Ashburnham community through the donation of tribute benches, and trees to be placed on Town-owned property. Ensure 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.

II. Policy

This policy is designed to set up a process and enable residents to support tribute benches, and trees through a contribution to the Town. The approval for the installation of a tribute bench, or tree will be solely through the Select Board. For property under the care, custody and control of other Boards, Commissions, or Trustees the final decisions shall be determined in a joint meeting with the Select Board and the respective Board, Commission, or Trustees. School properties fall under the jurisdiction of the Ashburnham Westminister Regional School Committee.

III. Process

Applications must be submitted to the Town Administrators office.

IV. Standards

Placement of a tribute bench or tree shall be done sparingly, for good cause shown, particularly in Winchester Park. At a minimum, persons being memorialized, must be deceased individuals and shall have at some point in their lives, held residency and made significant civic contributions to the Town. When considering a request for the placement of a tribute bench or tree on Town-owned land the Select Board shall apply the following standards:

- 1. Definition of Elements:** For the purpose of this policy, tribute “elements” are limited to benches or trees as determined by the needs and design consideration of the Town.
- 2. Acquisitions or Purchase:** The Town and the community have an interest in ensuring that elements purchased and installed be of high-quality related to style, appearance, durability, and ease of maintenance. The town will be responsible for the purchase and installation of all elements.

3. **Tribute Bench Styles:** All tribute benches shall be of one of two types. Bench A, made of steel and cast iron or Bench B, made of recycled wood materials.
4. **Tribute Trees:** All proposed tribute trees shall require review by the Department of Public Works, to ensure the appropriateness of the species and its proposed location, as well as the sufficiency of the selected tree size and condition.
5. **Exception:** Unless permitted by the Select Board, tribute benches and trees will be allowed only at the locations identified by a master list compiled by the Department of Public Works and updated periodically.
6. **Tribute Options:** Pursuant to this policy, donors may be authorized to do one of the following: (1) fund the installation of a new tribute bench or tree on Town property, at a location identified on the master list: (2) fund the replacement of an existing tribute bench or tree on Town property, at a location identified on the master list.
7. **Memorial Plaques:** Tribute 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 (3) lines, twenty (20) characters per line. Plaques associated with tribute trees shall be located within 8 feet of the tree, be no greater than one foot (1') by two feet (2') in size, made of bronze or granite, have a thickness of at least four inches (4"), and be installed flush to the ground. Purchases will be made through the Town using an approved vendor to ensure the highest quality, life, and durability. The proposed wording on the plaque shall require approval of the Select Board prior to installation.
8. **Maintenance:** Tribute benches/trees and related acknowledgement plaque are Town property. Accordingly, Town staff will make a commitment to reasonably maintain sponsored tribute elements for their useful life. The town will make every effort to repair damaged elements. However, the Town is not responsible for replacing items, including plaques, due to excessive damage or loss of elements at the end of their useful life.
9. **Appearance and Aesthetics:** The town and the community have an interest in ensuring the best appearance and aesthetic quality of all public facilities. All tribute elements should reflect the character of the town-owned park or facility. All elements will be installed by the Town and in a location determined by the Town in such a manner that will not substantially change the character of a property or its intended use.

10. Removal and/or Relocation: The Town reserves the right to remove and/or relocate tribute elements and their associated plaques, when they interfere with site safety, maintenance, or construction activities. In the event a tribute element must be permanently removed, the Town will seek an alternative location consistent with this policy. If the current contact information is on file, the Town will attempt to inform the sponsor of any action related to the disposition of the donation. In certain situation, such as safety or emergency situations, the notification may be made after the action is taken. Tribute/Memorial items currently on Town property are not grandfathered from this policy.

V. Procedures

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

1. Requests for permission to install new or replacement tribute benches or plant tribute trees on Town-owned property shall be directed to the Select Board through the Town Administrators office.
2. Sponsors shall be provided with a copy of this policy.
3. Before submitting a request, the sponsor is encouraged to discuss the matter with the Department of Public Works and review available locations.
4. All requests shall be made by completing the Tribute Bench/Tree Request Form.
5. Submitted request forms shall be reviewed by the Department of Public Works and any other department, board, trustees, or commission deemed appropriate.
6. All completed reviews must be submitted back to the Select Board within 21 days of receipt of the original request with their comments and/or recommendations.
7. After receipt by the Select Board, they will have 30 days to act on the request at a regularly scheduled Select Board meeting.
8. As a condition of the approval of a tribute bench or tree request the sponsor will make payment to the town (in a form acceptable to the town) in the amount equivalent to the cost of ordering the item, transportation costs and installation costs.
9. When all prior conditions have been met, the town will order the bench or tree and install the tribute bench, or plant a tribute tree, when conditions and circumstances permit.