

An Interview with City of New Bedford's Arborist, Chance Perks



Many motivated volunteers donated their time to make New Bedford a bit more beautiful

By Mark Zion

The statements here were given by Chance Perks, the Arborist for the City of New Bedford, in a completely unofficial capacity. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of Mr. Perks and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The City of New Bedford.

Could you tell me a little about what is going on today?

What we have here today is a bunch of volunteers from the tree care industry, from all over southeastern Massachusetts, that have been brought together through the Southeastern Massachusetts Tree Warden and Arborist Association. Bruce

Duffy, a relatively local resident has helped put this together in conjunction with myself and other individuals, to really kind of help us catch up on the tree work that's been needed here in Buttonwood.

We're all very busy in terms of the municipal end of things. We have a long list and it's really great to have these individuals come out and give us a hand with things. Another big component of this is to showcase the tree care industry, so this is nice that this is such a high profile spot. We're able to show people that this is what tree care is all about, see the equipment, see the technology, see the skill sets, see it's not something to be belittled.

To me it's a really great thing especially for the younger generations to see, that you can go into an industry that serves your local cities and towns, you get outside, you're connected with nature, it's just a really great industry to be a part of. That's what we're trying to showcase here today.



It was a gorgeous day Saturday with perfect weather for arboring!

I saw some guys that looked like they were going rock climbing with all the gear and ropes and helmets.

The rigging that's needed and the equipment and the technical knowledge is really quite amazing. We're getting a lot done, which for me from the city end is awesome because we have a lot to get done, so this is really helping us out. Also there is the historical context of this park, being designed by Olmsted himself, it's nice to keep true to what he started here.

Having these tree companies come out, and they get it you know, they understand this stuff, they see the specimens we have in this park, and they're just outstanding. These crews that have come out, and they're all volunteers. I keep asking them "Ok so what's the incentive here, are you guys getting tax write-offs?" and they are like, "are you kidding me, we're just giving back, friend. That's what we do." I said "Wow, that's outstanding," and every single one of them is saying that. So that's really really cool. For me just seeing other tree care professionals in the city is really great to see.

How many tree care companies are here today?

I couldn't give an exact number, but if I had to guess I'd say six or seven, I could be off one or two in either direction. I say probably six companies and I'd say a solid thirty personnel, all working together on things from plantings to take-downs to raking to crane work and climbing and pruning. This is their industry, they know this inside and out, their doing it while people are walking their dogs.

We're plucking trees with huge cranes while people are walking their dogs. I think it goes to show the level of control that these individuals have when they're working in the trees. It's humbling, especially for me who also works in the tree care industry but on a much smaller scale. We focus on one tree at a time, my guys are great, the guys that work for the city, but seeing these guys do it with such finesse like this [on a large scale] is just outstanding.

Chance also told me after the interview was over that he wanted to expressly thank all the tree care companies that came out to do work in Buttonwood Park on Saturday.

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