

**MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY
7:30 AM – Wednesday, December 12, 2007
City Hall, City Manager's Conference Room**

DRAFT

Call to Order:

Peter Loughlin, Chair
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Everett Kern, General Foreman

A.J. Dupre, Community Forester
June Rogers, Member
Richard Adams, Member

Also present were Jason Wise and Fred Engelbach.

Peter Loughlin called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m.

- 1. Acceptance of the Minutes** – Minutes of the November 14, 2007 meeting were accepted as presented.

- 2. Tree Removal Requests**

243 Wibird Street – Located at intersection of South St. side of Hawthorne St.

MOTION made by Richard Adams to approve removal of this tree. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

23 Willard Ave. – The Chair stated there are two Norway Maples and two years ago we denied removal stating if there were other trees there to replace those, we would reconsider. They paid half the cost and the City planted two trees and they planted one. They have now asked that they be removed.

MOTION made by Richard Adams for removal. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

127 Willard Ave. – The trees are on Ash St. June Rogers looked at the tree and stated there is nothing much left of it. The Chair stated the 1st tree definitely needed to come down. Everett Kern stated the first one is the worst one and the 2nd one isn't too far behind it. The Chair is in support of taking the 1st tree down, plant, get one or two new trees planted there and in a couple of years remove the 2nd one.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to recommend removal of the tree closest to Willard Ave. but not the one closest to Orchard St. Seconded by Richard Adams. Motion passed.

- 2. Portsmouth Parade Mall Renovations** – Planting – Patrick Crimmins, Appledore Engineering – The Chair spoke with Patrick Cummins yesterday and they did not get everything done.
MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table until next month. Seconded by Everett Kern. Motion passed.

- 3. Tree Inventory Report**—GIS—Jason Wise-Fred Engelbach – Fred Engelbach brought the committee up to date stating it is a work in progress. What they thought was an exercise on how to use the PDA, the hand held computer and the technical aspects of that evolved into discussion of what data elements do we really want to collect in the PDA and then evolved into what are we going to do with the data once we collect it and the use of it and what products do we collectively need to better manage the tree assets for the City.

Jason Wise is looking at what possibilities there are to handle the data and asked Jason to explain and the direction he is thinking of going.

Jason Wise referred to using a paper based system and not just PDA, partly because of the use of volunteers, probably 10,000 trees. If an intern is collecting data, it is straightforward, if volunteers it is more complicated. We have a combination of a paper based and web based system. There is a form to be used collecting data about each tree. Some information doesn't change, but there is

other information to be updated periodically such as condition, and the data can be entered into a website, which would only be accessible within City Hall or Public Works, not the public. We will be able to bring up a map on the screen, click on a tree and see when it was visited, what information the volunteer/intern collected. This ties into several other projects that is not all about trees that involve basically visiting things repeatedly, and gathering information about them.

Mr. Engelbach stated that we will continue to work on this and put something forward for us to review.

Jason Wise stated we can print the maps or give people the means to print their own.

Steve Parkinson stated this program was obtained through the Police Department and the Fire Department so it could be used to get a 3dimensional view of a building so that if there were issues they could pull up that building and look at it.

Jason Wise stated that all trees that were collected and in the data base, (6,000 or 8,000) are numbered. This information is easily accessible from City Hall or Public Works Department, it is not publicly available.

The Chair asked what the next step is and there had been some discussion of an intern.

Jason Wise suggested this might be a good project for a school.

Fred Engelbach stated he did not think we were there yet and want to continue to work on the data system and determine what kind of reports are available, to have Public Works take a good look at it and determine if this is really of value, how will we use it in managing and get some of these answers first. When we good out, look at the trees and record data, the system has to be simple so that volunteers can easily be trained to go out and do the inventory and will produce reliable data.

Then we will have to look at who is going to do this, volunteers, contact universities, perhaps public schools, interested neighborhood communities as a project. Going out and looking at 10,000 trees is no small task, will have to break it into increments and do it step by step.

The next step is to have us continue working on it, is where we are now.

Steve Parkinson stated that when we get around to going out and doing that, we need to speak with the City Manager about the possibility of an intern to come in, but there will still be a great need for volunteers, your steward program. From a Public Works aspect it will be great information for this Committee that we assess the evaluation now and then 3 years from now somebody comes in and says this tree needs to come down we can look back and see what our trimming record is and the history on the tree and feels it will be great information.

The Chair thanked Fred and Jason for their work.

- 5. Clotilde Strauss Memorial Plantings** – The Chair asked about Haven Park. Everett Kern stated there is an area where the camperdown elm was that could use a replacement tree at the edge of Haven and South and we lost a couple of large pines there as well, there is space in Haven.

Steve Parkinson stated he would like to do a little more than just plant a tree, maybe have an area where we could put some curbing, etc. Suggested looking at the area in Haven to see what we could do to make it more than just planting a tree, whether it be a bench or something of that nature.

Dick Adams has a proposal going beyond the scope of this Committee, but suggested there are 66 City owned acres along Sagamore Creek that narrowly escaped being paved over in the interest of the Middle School and would like to see that whole area designated as Clotilde Strauss Nature Center or Park. This would probably involve City Council action. Feels the City Council might consider once the Middle School issue is resolved.

The Chair stated that Arbor Day is April 25th and would be nice to be ready to go at that point.

AJ stated it would be nice to do Arbor Day presentation on Arbor Day.

Richard Adams also referred to a defunct drinking fountain in Haven Park and the possibility of compiling with the wishes of the grantors of the land in making the tree site more elegant.

The fountains are mostly in playgrounds.

The Chair stated a decision should be made by January and get a stone. There is a stone in place at the corner of State and Washington. A decision will be made in January.

- 6. City Capital Improvements** – The Chair thought it would be nice to have a procedure when the City does improvements like the Congress St. improvements, we get in at the end of it and would feel more comfortable if they could get in earlier and talk about species of trees, etc. Could we be alerted to those kinds of programs?

Steve Parkinson stated we can send you a notice of the public meeting. There is one coming up in February or March, we have had a preliminary meeting with the neighborhood on Woodbury Ave. Islington Street have been holding meetings and is being handled by Nancy Carmer.

The Chair referred to Middle St. and asked about the possibility of doing bump outs in certain locations for trees.

Steve Parkinson responded it was replacement.

- 7. Old Business** – Richard Adams asked if he heard back from the Nature Conservancy regarding the Rte 33 trees.

Steve Parkinson had plans.

The Chair has spoken with the Nature Conservancy and was told they spoke to Fish and Game and would be interested in having some native species planted along there. The Chair also spoke to Debbie Finnigan regarding the plans and will look at them after the meeting. We will put some suggestions together for them and the City and asked if the project was still open?

Steve Parkinson stated the project is due to go to bid in February.

June Rogers wondered how we can do something about houses being numbered properly.

Steve Parkinson stated there is a City Ordinance requiring people to have house numbers. Currently there are a number of same or similar street name changes going before the Planning Board and ultimately to the City Council and part of this is to bring out through public process reemphasizing that people need to have numbers on their houses.

Next Meeting—7:30 a.m., Wednesday, January 9, 2008.

8. Adjourned

Respectfully submitted, Peter J. Loughlin-Chairman