

**MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY**

**MINUTES**

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, January 11, 2011  
City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Manager's Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice Chairman; A. J. Dupere, Community Forester; Everett Kern, Public Works General Foreman; June Rogers; Leslie Stevens;

**Members Excused:** Steve Parkinson and John Bohenko

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and introduced the members of the Committee.

1. **Acceptance of Minutes of December 14, 2011 Meeting** – Unanimously approved.
2. **Tree Removal Requests:**

**742 Middle Road** – Mr. Dupere shared pictures of this tree with the Committee. This was a DPW request. Mr. Kern indicated that this was requested several years ago but they didn't act on it at that time. It is diseased and he feels it is time now. Ms. Stevens made a motion to remove the tree. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**35 Boss Avenue** – This was a DPW request. Mr. Adams felt it was in really bad shape. Mr. Kern received a call yesterday from someone who wanted to save the tree. She said she would be at the meeting but did not appear to be present. Mr. Kern told her that they would be replacing it when or if they removed it. Mr. Adams made a motion to remove the tree. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (NOTE: Lenae Johnson arrived after the motion was made and indicated that she had hoped that the tree could be saved. After discussion with Chairman Loughlin and Committee members, she indicated that she understood the circumstances)

**306 Aldrich Road** – This was requested by the homeowner. Mr. Kern confirmed this tree was not in good shape and they would like a new tree. Mr. Dupere added that someone clipped the top of the tree years ago, probably for utility work. Mr. Adams didn't think that the tree next to it looked much better. Mr. Kern stated he could put that one on their list for next month.

Jeff Ott went by this tree and agreed that the tree next to it is in rough shape but he felt it could just be pruned as the rest of the tree isn't that bad. He felt that the decay in the tree in question is probably 20 years old and the tree has grown around it. The top was clipped out of the tree so it doesn't have a full crown. He felt a long term solution would be to have another tree planted. He asked, when a homeowner asks for another tree to be planted, whether the new tree could be planted on the other side of the sidewalk. Chairman Loughlin stated that the City normally would not do that.

Ms. Stevens made a motion to remove the tree. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Discussion of Landscape Plans for Portwalk 3 Project, 195 Hanover Street** – Chairman Loughlin stated that Portwalk was previously before the Committee and were back today. Present from Portwalk were Robbie Woodburn, Landscape Architect, and Tim Levine. Chairman Loughlin stepped down and Vice Chairman Adams chaired the hearing.

Ms. Woodburn reviewed the changes they made since last month. There was a structure in the middle on the Maplewood Avenue side that housed the trash and there was a pergola all the way across the opening of the building. More retail has been added and the pergola has been shortened. There were questions about the canopy of the street trees so they will be using more columnar trees. On the Deer Street side they are using three Ginkgo Princeton Sentry trees which, in an urban setting, will be restrained and will be an appropriate tree for that side. On the Portwalk Place side they have Armstrong Maples and in the center they have two Carpinus Betulus Frans Fontaine which is another upright tree that would be pruned up to above 6' in height. As you come around to Hanover Street, they have Armstrong Red Maples and Ginkgos. There had been Scarlet Oaks but might have gotten too wide. On the Maplewood Avenue side, when they were doing the pergola, they put planters underneath with arborvitae to give it an evergreen feel and give it some more structure. They have utilities underneath the sidewalk along the Maplewood Avenue side which precludes them from putting the trees where they want to put them. Between the edge of the building and the property line on the sidewalk, they have an 18" planter that is planted and vines that will run along a trellis. Ms. Woodburn displayed elevations of the new plan. In the planter, they have a combination of hydrangea and ilexglabra inkberry, which is another evergreen.

Mr. Levine also pointed out that, per their request to not put all of the same tree on each street, they have mixed them up

Ms. Stevens asked why there are trees on Maplewood Avenue now but they can't put trees there. Ms. Woodburn believed it had something to do with the configuration of the curb and the building and the property line. Mr. Levin clarified that the trees that are there now are on their property where the new building will be. The new building will go right up to the sidewalk except 3' where the planters will be.

Mr. Dupere asked about snow removal. Mr. Kern confirmed that the sidewalks are 5' in width so it's the same as downtown. It's going to be tight and they will have snow right up to their door.

Ms. Stevens felt that that part of town is just a lot of brick and another stretch with no trees is depressing but she understands why they can't put trees in. Mr. Adams agreed and felt it was like putting lipstick on a pig. This was the first time he had seen a drawing of the building and he thought it looks like Frank Jones old shoe factory that used to be on Islington Street.

Mr. Levine confirmed this presentation was just informational to show the Committee what they revised since their last presentation.

**4. Lincoln Avenue Sewer Separation Shade Tree Replanting**

(Exhibits provided to Committee members: Letter to Committee from Peter Loughlin, List of possible Shade Tree Replanting Sites, Copies of Relevant Tax Maps, Draft Letter to Homeowners).

Chairman Loughlin had provided the Committee members with a list of 81 possible sites to replant shade trees and he passed around a series of photos of the sites. He also has a CD with the pictures if anyone was interested. He also provided a copy of a letter to send to the landowners and he thought they might also want to add something about having them contact Everett Kern if they want to get on the list early. He also included in his letter that this would take 2-3 years. Mr. Kern indicated that he has already heard from 6 or so residents. Mr. Dupere noted that there are more on this list than they have money for. Chairman Loughlin felt if someone doesn't want a tree they will probably tell them but he didn't want to encourage everyone to contact them either. He asked the Committee members to think about places on the list that would be appropriate. Mr. Adams commended Chairman Loughlin on the tremendous amount of work he put into this. It occurred to him that they don't want to give the impression that everyone that gets a letter will get a tree because some of the sites don't call for one. As Mr. Dupere noted, if they did all of these there would be no trees planted elsewhere in the City. He felt the Committee should initially focus on the important ones. Chairman Loughlin felt Lincoln Avenue is probably the key, especially where they are taking down some giant trees. Mr. Adams thought they might also include a note that watering instructions will be provided as that may be a sensitive issue with the cost of water being what it is. But it might help soften it if the letter says we will provide guidance on watering.

Ms. Stevens thought they might add something about how trees help with cooling in the summer. She asked what the process was to decide what will be replaced or planted. Mr. Kern responded that they put out a newsletter every year and they tend to go to people who are interested first and he keeps a list as he receives phone calls and emails. This has already gone out in the newsletter.

Chairman Loughlin would expect they would be lucky to get 1/3 of the people responding. Mr. Kern felt they would plant 25 -30 trees a year average.

Mr. Adams noted that Woodbury Avenue has been hit very hard. Mr. Kern agreed that almost all of the trees on Woodbury are failing.

Chairman Loughlin confirmed that he will send a letter out and he asked the members to look at the sites to think about where it would be important to put trees. He will also ask about the availability of funds in this budget.

**5. Update on Tree Ordinance** – Peter Britz has advised Chairman Loughlin that the Ordinance will be reviewed by the Conservation Commission at their meeting this afternoon.

**6. Discussion of Tree at 384 Dennett Street** – Chairman Loughlin confirmed that they discussed this tree last month. The lady at that address was here and she mentioned fires in the tree and other problems. Jeff Ott, registered arborist, lives near the tree and wondered if the tree really needs to be

removed. They need to decide what to do. They would probably have to have another public hearing if they wanted to do something other than remove it.

Jeff Ott stated this was a tree he has noticed over the past 30 years and it is an example of a tree that has some problems but also deserves additional consideration due to its size and location. They are losing a lot of trees around the City for various reasons. He brought pictures of the tree and pointed out the decay on the back side of the tree and old cuts where branches were removed over the years. You can see a ring of "wound wood" and it shows decay in the trunk of the tree, much like all trees of that age. This tree is a different shape than the others they voted to take down. This tree has successfully "walled off" the decay and has continued to grow around it. He brought a sample of decay in a section of tree to explain the process to the Committee. The parameter they use is to measure the diameter and they will only need 1/3 of the radius for the tree to be strong enough.

He feels the problem with this tree is that it will tend to shed branches from time to time and as they have had extraordinary storms lately. If they continue to take down trees like this one, they won't have any big trees left. This tree is approximately 100 years old and has the cooling effect of 50 small trees. He believes it would take an extraordinary storm to shed this tree. The problem should be addressed by PSNH as the wires are "hot wires".

Mr. Kern felt if PSNH should come in and prune the tree it won't leave much. Mr. Ott stated PSNH only has 10' and if they prune more than that then they are liable.

Mr. Kern stated the tree was in the right of way. Ms. Stevens asked with Mr. Ott suggested they do. Mr. Ott felt that the City has to deal with public liability but he doesn't see any in this case. He only sees some broken branches that need to be pruned out.

Mr. Adams indicated that last month there was no concern about the tree falling over but the concerns were that the wires in the tree have caused fires. Mr. Kern added that they have lost several major limbs over the year.

Mr. Adams reiterated that this Committee does not like to take trees down but they have to be concerned with liability. Also they would never plant another of these trees in this location because of the wires. Mr. Ott agreed that a silver maple is a negative as they shed.

Ms. Stevens felt that the branches keep falling off or are being pruned so they will continue to have the same issues. She understands what Mr. Ott was saying but this is going to keep happening. Why not put another tree in this location that will flourish. Mr. Ott totally understood their reasoning, adding that the tree would not be in the shape it is if it hadn't been pruned the way it has been. A lot of municipalities are now trying to control proper pruning of trees.

Mr. Adams indicated that the City is trying to prune on a more systematic basis. Mr. Kern stated that the City has only been doing this for 5-6 years and it's only the tip of the iceberg.

Mr. Dupere was not at last month's meeting but noticed they revisited the tree on Sheffield. There are trees that they revisit continuously and it is sometimes difficult to determine a proper balance.

Mr. Ott felt this was not a good example of a tree that should be spared.

Ms. Stevens made a motion to have their previous decision stand. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Old Business**

None.

7. **New Business**

None.

8. **Next Meeting** – Wednesday, February 8, 2012.

A motion to adjourn at 8:35 a.m. was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse  
Administrative Assistant  
Planning Department