

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, November 14, 2012
Portsmouth City Hall, City Manager's Conference Room**

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice Chairman; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; A. J. Dupere, Community Forester; Steve Parkinson, Director, Public Works; Leslie Stevens; and Dennis Souto

Members Excused: n/a

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. **Acceptance of Minutes of the October 10, 2012 Meeting.** Ms. Stevens made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Parkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Tree Removal Requests**
 1. **84 Haven Road**, requested by DPW & Resident. There was no discussion. Mr. Adams made a motion to remove. Mr. Parkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - 2.) **190 Hillside Drive**, requested by DPW. The owner, Dennis Moulton, was present and stated he would support the removal of the tree. Mr. Adams made a motion to remove as the tree is clearly dead. Mr. Parkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - 3.) **82 Peverly Hill Road**, requested by resident. Mr. Parkinson stated the tree is causing damage to the roof of the house and the driveway. Mr. Croteau indicated that there was a huge hole down the middle and there was rot coming out of it. Mr. Dupere looked at it from the ground level and stated it didn't look good. Mr. Parkinson made a motion to remove. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - 4.) **28 Doris Avenue** (Tree is on Greenside), requested by Resident. This tree is a pitch pine. Mr. Croteau stated their issue is by the way the tree is growing at an angle towards the street they are concerned it will come down and strike the house across the street. Mr. Dupere visited the tree but it was difficult to see the bottom because of other plantings. It looked like the tree had been doing this for a long time. Without knowing if they have done anything in their back yard, such as clipping the roots, he felt it would be best to prune the tree and opening up the top a little bit. It is not leaning at a severe angle. Mr. Dupere made a motion to prune up the bottom limbs as needed and open up the top of the tree. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - 5.) **55 Mangrove Street** (trimming only), requested by Resident. Al Pace of Pace's Tree Service was present. He received a call from the owner, David Levasseur. Next to the road there is a

mature silver maple growing rapidly towards the house. It is quite large and as they grow out they have a horizontal attitude and silver maples are a weak wood. Mr. Levasseur asked Mr. Pace to cut a limb off but he realized it was a City tree. In his opinion, the tree is a threat to the structure. It is healthy but that's the problem as it's growing quickly towards the house. The resident also wanted to know if the City would be willing to split the cost of taking the limb down. Mr. Levasseur could contribute \$500. Ms. Stevens indicated there are two Silver Maples but he is only talking about the one offending the house. Mr. Pace's only concern was that it's growing out and down and it loses its ability to sustain itself. Eventually it will come down. Mr. Dupere looked at this tree and there are some dead limbs on the top of the tree that are overhanging the road. Mr. Adams felt the bigger issue of whether the tree should be trimmed is if it is a City function or the home owners. Mr. Parkinson indicated that in the past they have removed limbs that have gone onto people's houses. Attorney Loughlin asked if this tree had been before them before. Mr. Croteau stated he has gone out before to look at the tree and a few years ago they cut some weight off of one side. Mr. Parkinson felt if the Committee approves removing the limb, they could work with Mr. Pace on how it comes down. Ms. Stevens made a motion to approve trimming the tree. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. Mr. Parkinson confirmed that the City will work with Mr. Pace on this work. Attorney Loughlin added that they are very careful about what they approve and almost never recommend the removal of a healthy tree. The motion passed unanimously.

6.) **178 Aldrich Road**, requested by DPW. Mr. Croteau stated this tree is full of holes. Mr. Parkinson made a motion to remove. Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7.) **726 Middle Street** (Tree is on Aldrich), requested by DPW. Ms. Stevens indicated that this tree had a huge branch come down in the hurricane. Mr. Croteau added that the residents are concerned about the back leader. If they took that off it would leave the tree completely unbalanced. Mr. Adams made a motion to remove. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Croteau pointed out that a gentleman from 100 Essex Street was present as he had talked to Everett Kern about a tree on his property. It did not get on this month's Agenda but he asked if he could speak to the Committee. Attorney Loughlin stated that would be fine.

Carlton Foss of 100 Essex Avenue stated that there was a tree on the corner of his lot that is a silver maple which he cannot take down as it sits right on the property line. He would like this tree removed as the branches interfere with his power and cable lines and is heading towards his roof. He would like to replace it with something more manageable. Mr. Croteau confirmed that the tree was not tagged. Attorney Loughlin explained that they must tag it and they could then put it on the next Agenda for a public hearing. That would be scheduled for December 12th at 7:30 am. Attorney Loughlin apologized for the mix up. Mr. Foss stated his house is the white cape and it is the third house on the right.

3. **Trees in Front of Rockingham Condominiums.** This was discussed last month. Attorney Loughlin had received 2-3 phone calls from Gene Fisk, who represents the Rockingham Condominiums, who was very anxious to have trees planted but no one has ever shown up at a public hearing. The Committee has stated they are in favor of Elm Streets. Mr. Parkinson stated he has not heard from anyone either. Mr. Adams mentioned that David Moore is involved with the City putting up a historic marker regarding Frank Jones and his hotel in front of the Rockingham. Mr. Moore had

suggested the possibility of putting the marker in the corner of one of the tree planters because he felt it would be a long time before the tree would become an issue. Mr. Parkinson felt it would be hard viewing the marker and felt it would be better right up against the raised wall in front of the Rockingham. There is a substantial wall at the edge of the sidewalk and he felt they would be better off centering it on the building so that people walking by could read it. Mr. Adams indicated he will get back to Mr. Moore.

Ms. Stevens asked if there is anything like that at the John Paul Jones House. Mr. Parkinson responded that there used to be something on the back side of the fence at one point in time.

Going back to the trees, Mr. Parkinson recalled that at one of their meetings the Committee talked about planting elm trees. He felt they should just plan to plant the elms in the spring.

4. **Willard Avenue Replanting.** Ms. Stevens had sent Attorney Loughlin a note about working with the neighborhood and he has received a telephone call from Patricia Edwards. Several years ago they removed trees in front of her home and she planted two trees to replace them and they look very, very good. She indicated a willingness to work with the neighborhood and he thought she could talk to each of the neighbors to see who would commit to watering a tree or two. Ms. Stevens confirmed that Ms. Edwards is very anxious to work with her neighbors to help care for the trees. She was hoping to come today but she has four children so 7:30 am is tough for her. Attorney Loughlin stated he will send her a letter.

5. **Tree Removal by Fairpoint on Middle Road.** Mr. Parkinson stated he has never heard anything back from them. The issues were that they cut down a number of City trees, there are some unsightly stumps still there and they wanted some compensation. Mr. Parkinson suggested turning the matter over to the City Legal Department and have them pursue it.

6. **Spring Tree Planting Plans.** Attorney Loughlin indicated this was just for a general discussion of spring planting but Mr. Croteau sent him a string of emails from people requesting trees in front of their houses which came in as a result of the City Newsletter. Mr. Croteau indicated he has one more from a woman called Connie and he will get more information on that. Attorney Loughlin advised him that the Committee went out to the neighborhood and put a list together on what seemed to be the coldest day of the winter and they looked at each site. Ms. Stevens believed that Angie was taking notes and probably has the list.

Attorney Loughlin requested that they have the lists for December. Mr. Souto added that they will want to focus on the Lincoln Avenue area. Mr. Parkinson confirmed that the City is done with Lincoln Avenue and some of the side streets are done also. Mr. Parkinson asked them to stay away from the intersections because of the sight distances.

7. **Daniel Street/Sheafe Street/Penhallow Street Sidewalk Improvements.** Attorney Loughlin understood that the City may be replacing sidewalks and he wanted to find out more about the project to see how much room there may be for trees. Mr. Parkinson stated they have money to do from Daniel Street from the square to the Connie Bean to tie in improvements coming from the bridge project. The area in front of the Federal building on both Daniel and Penhallow will not be touched at this time because of the impending turnover to the City. They are just finishing the surveys, they will design this winter and will incorporate trees wherever they can. There are spots where attempts were made in the mid-70's but they all died and were never replaced so that is one of the areas they are looking at. Attorney Loughlin felt they had the same problem at lower Congress Street and they

solved that with 8' x 4' curbed areas and those trees are thriving. Mr. Parkinson agreed and that is what he is thinking for Penhallow through to Chapel. The other sections are probably too narrow. They will do the best they can. In the next budget, they have requested funding for Sheafe Street and the section of Penhallow from Daniel to Bow. There will not be any bump outs and they will try to widen sidewalks if possible. Attorney Loughlin stated it is the one area in the City that has no trees. Mr. Parkinson confirmed there will be public meetings and the project will be pretty easy as there is not much they can change.

8. Old Business.

Mr. Adams mentioned 379 Colonial Drive from last month regarding the cutting of the root. There was supposed to be some liaison with him regarding cutting the root. Mr. Parkinson believed they were going to look at the sidewalk.

Mr. Adams also mentioned the two spruce trees on Maplewood. Mr. Adams had suggested that PSNH provide two new trees and the representative's (Bob Burner) response was tepid although he did not say no. Attorney Loughlin will send him a letter. Mr. Dupere added that part of Mr. Burner's response was that they are no longer PSNH and he said they should send a letter to Bob Fast as they will be having significant staff changes in the near future. Mr. Parkinson noted that their motion was the removal of stumps and the suggestion that PSNH work with the home owner to plant 2 new trees.

Mr. Dupere mentioned there was a dead tree on Broad Street at the end of Rockland Street. He didn't know if it needs to be posted or not but it should be added to the list.

Ms. Stevens asked about the Portwalk project and wondered if anything has changed and if they are still taking the trees down. She wondered what they are doing with those trees. Mr. Dupere indicated if they are going to take them out of the ground they would have to wrap the base or put them in a big bucket. Mr. Parkinson believed the trees have only been there for a couple of years. Mr. Dupere felt the cheapest option is to cut the trees down but the next option would be to spade them out and put them in other places. The perfect place to put them would be a park. A retirement situation would be required rather than a hostile situation like downtown. Attorney Loughlin will talk to Jeff Johnston to see what they plan to do with them.

Mr. Dupere reminded the Committee that the excavator at the Plains Ball Park still owes them a tree so there may be some money there to help out with the spading.

Ms. Stevens thought there was some change to the Portwalk project. Attorney Loughlin stated that a big conduit box on Maplewood is prohibiting many plantings. Mr. Parkinson did not believe the plan has changed since the presentation that was made at one of their meetings.

9. New Business. Mr. Dupere indicated that on Route 33 there was another tree to add to their list and there was also a dead tree at the end of Rockland.

Mr. Dupere had a question about the trees on Route 33 which were part of the DOT Bridge Project. They are still staked. Mr. Parkinson confirmed the City will do something about that. Mr. Croteau added that they have replaced a couple of those trees but the original ones are all staked.

Mr. Adams believed the recommended procedure is to take the stakes out after one year.

Mr. Parkinson mentioned that a rogue tree has appeared on Pierce Island.

Attorney Loughlin will be sending a letter to the City Council thanking Everett Kern for his service to this committee.

Mr. Adams brought up the red oak in Haven Park. He and Mr. Souto looked at it and they tried the resistograph on it. Mr. Souto felt that the results showed it was in pretty good shape. Mr. Dupere stated that the oak is an incredibly tough tree. Around the base there are a number of burls that have cropped up and he was not sure where they came from. Mr. Croteau believed the tree is fine. He will look inside it sometime.

10. Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 12, 2012.

A motion to adjourn at 8:30.m. was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department