

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

**MINUTES**

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, December 12, 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; Leslie Stevens; and Dennis Souto

**Members Excused:** Steve Parkinson, Director, Public Works;

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

1. **Acceptance of Minutes of the November 14, 2012 Meeting.** Mr. Adams requested a revision to Item 9 on page 4. The minutes were unanimously approved, as revised.

2. **Tree Removal Requests:**

A. **28-30 Dearborn Street, request by the Resident and DPW.** Attorney Loughlin indicated there is a long history regarding this property, which is owned by the Reagan family, and there have been some recent disagreements between the former spouses. Mr. Croteau confirmed that the wall has to be removed as it is on City property and the trees have to go when the wall is removed. The wall creates a life safety concern. Due to the parking situation, emergency vehicles cannot get down the road. The Reagans will be responsible for taking out the wall. Mr. Adams asked how they will re-adjust the slope as it is pretty high. Mr. Croteau was not sure but he assumes they will have to put a retaining wall back up on their property. Mr. Adams asked if there was any other option. Mr. Croteau did not believe so and also indicated that this is being requested by the City Legal Department. Mr. Adams made a motion to remove the tree. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. **Broad Street at Rockland, request by DPW.** Attorney Loughlin indicated that the Committee has talked about this in the past. The tree is definitely dead and has been for some time. Ms. Stevens made a motion to remove the tree. Mr. Dupere seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. **100 Essex Avenue, requested by the resident.** Mr. Foss Carlton was present. He stated that there was another tree in the same condition on the other corner of his lot and the City took it down. He would like to see this red maple tree come down and he would replace it with a smaller tree and some greenery and set it back a little bit. Mr. Adams couldn't see anything wrong with it except it has been very poorly pruned over the years. Mr. Dupere asked if the front part has been lowered. Attorney Loughlin believed it has been that way since he delivered newspapers in the 1950's. Mr. Carlton indicated it is cut right back to the actual line and it is wound into the telephone lines. Mr. Croteau confirmed this is a City tree. Mr. Carlton believed it was half on his property and half on City property. There was pavement along the front at one time but when they put the new stormwater system in it was all covered over with loam. The tree on the other corner was removed about 8 years

ago. Attorney Loughlin asked if it leafed out in the summer. Mr. Carlton confirmed there were leaves on it during the summer. Mr. Dupere felt that Mark Turner could prune the tree and get a better look at it to see if he sees something they can't see from the ground. Mr. Adams asked Mr. Carlton what his concern was. Mr. Carlton didn't think it looked very good, it has branches heading towards the house that the squirrels run across, and it blocks the sun on that side of the house so nothing grows. Mr. Stevens stated that they typically do not take down trees that appear to be healthy. She understands his concerns but she felt that some pruning could alleviate some of them. Attorney Loughlin would feel more comfortable with this request if it wasn't the only tree in the whole area. Ms. Stevens suggested planting a couple of trees to the right of his house and when they become mature and as this tree continues to decline, he would still have healthy trees. She felt this tree provides a lot of shade and cooling in the summer and she thought he would notice a big difference without it. Attorney Loughlin suggested that they have the City to go out and prune it. He further stated that this Committee has consistently voted to keep trees that are reasonably healthy, unless there are some unusual circumstances such as the one on Dearborn Street. He felt if they get it pruned up and some other trees are planted, the critical role it plays won't be as important. Mr. Carlton agreed it would help to get the tree pruned up. Mr. Croteau added they can remove the large limb heading towards the house and clean the whole thing up. Mr. Adams made a motion to proceed with pruning the tree. Mr. Suoto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Big Tree Information.** Attorney Loughlin indicated that Mr. Croteau sent out this packet to the members. Mr. Dupere indicated that the author is on the Big Tree Board, which is a voluntary state wide program. There is no legal protection for the trees but it makes for an interesting mix. He is working with PSNH as they took down the county champion elm which was dead and was able to get PSNH to cover some of the costs. The Big Tree Board program is to put people on notice that the trees are there. Portsmouth has the biggest black walnut over by Islington where it meets Route 33 on the Sherburne property. There is the horse chestnut downtown at the Moffett Ladd House that has a sign. The author is going to publish a book and he is trying to get some support for it. Mr. Adams pointed out that one problem with the program is that big trees tend to be near the end of their lives and it is disappointing because most of the state champions end up dying. Mr. Dupere mentioned that a lot of trees are on private property so it's hard to bring people on the land to show the tree. Attorney Loughlin said he would send a thank you letter to him.

#### 4. **Tree Planting Requests and**

5. **Spring Tree Planting Plans.** Attorney Loughlin indicated they a list of emails received from people but asked if there was another list. Mr. Croteau believed that was the only list and he was still putting that together. Attorney Loughlin thought they should have the list completed for the January meeting. Mr. Adams didn't think it had to be done all at once. If they get some addresses they can start going out and make some recommendations. Mr. Dupere indicated that Nancy Carmer used to help them out with the bidding and they would like to send things out in March. They should find out what it takes to get it out and work backwards to make sure they get it done in time. They should check with Steve Parkinson about the budget. Ms. Stevens did not want to lose sight of the Lincoln Avenue area. Attorney Loughlin has a list of the trees they have removed over the past five years. Mr. Croteau has all of that information and he could make a list of all of the new trees they have planted and send it to him. Mr. Adams asked that the white oak that was planted at Junkins and Lincoln be replaced as it didn't survive. Ms. Stevens didn't think they have done as good a job caring for trees after they have been planted. Mr. Dupere agreed that goes back to making an inventory so they know where to go back to. He is working with the Dept of Agriculture and applying for a grant and part of that is helping towns with their inventories. It is an Excel based program and it is a fairly decent program. There may be some money from the grant to fund an inventory. Mr. Croteau confirmed the

City uses an independent asset management database (Vueworks) and they should see if they can make them jive and work together. Otherwise, they should use the City's database. The nice thing is that it is web-based and not computer based. They do not have tree information on it currently but they can make an additional layer for that.

6. **Old Business.** Ms. Stevens asked if anyone had heard back from Fairpoint. Attorney Loughlin confirmed that City Attorney Sullivan indicated he would contact the Public Utilities Commission rather than Fairpoint.

Mr. Croteau brought up 379 Colonial Drive where the gentleman had the root problem. They are going there today. The root is heading towards the house and the sidewalk is lifting. They will probably cut it back to the property line and re-grade over the root on the sidewalk. Ms. Stevens added that much of the sidewalks are like that in that area so it's hard to make a case for just one when all of them are like that.

7. **New Business.** n/a

8. **Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 9, 2013.**

A motion to adjourn at 8:00 a.m. was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse  
Administrative Assistant  
Planning Department