

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, February 13, 2013
Portsmouth City Hall, City Manager's Conference Room**

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

Members Excused: n/a

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

1. **Acceptance of Minutes of the January 9, 2013 Meeting.** Unanimously approved.
2. **Tree Removal Requests – None.**
3. **Presentation Regarding Lincoln Avenue Sewer Separation Contract 3C.**

Materials were provided to the Committee and were extremely helpful. Rick Dolce, of the Department of Public Works, was present with Phil MacDonald and Dan Rochette, of Underwood Engineers, and explained this was the next phase of the sewer separation project. It involves utility replacement in the streets, new pavement, and new curbing and sidewalks which will impact the tree roots and treescape in general. Their package showed trees that need to be removed based on the location of utilities, curbing and sidewalk and those that would be severely impacted. The red trees on the list are targeted for removal and the blue were identified in the walk-through they had with the Committee last week. At this time, they were looking for a recommendation, have the trees posted for the next meeting so they can see if there are any major issues with the residents. They should have funds to replace trees on a 1 to 1 rate.

Attorney Loughlin asked if they have language in the contracts about causing damage to trees. Mr. Dolce stated it was and they have sent a bill to a contractor for damage from the last phase. Attorney Loughlin asked if there was a way to segregate that money so that it could go into the tree account. Mr. Parkinson indicated they would have to work with the Finance Department to see how to accomplish that.

Ms. Stevens noted there are 18 trees recommended for removal. Four of the committee were on the site walk so they don't have any questions. Mr. Dupere noted that some trees are already pushing up the sidewalks and are in a tough location. Removing them before construction gives them a better planting spot in a year or two.

Mr. Rochette stated that Union Street is an area where they will be adding space for tree replacement. Mr. Stevens agreed that they want to hit Union hard with replanting.

Mr. Adams asked how much money was allocated for trees. Mr. Dolce confirmed there was \$15,000. Mr. Adams felt that would be plenty of money for this project and asked if the remaining money could be allocated to Lincoln Street, where a lot was not funded. Mr. Parkinson confirmed the project is being done with all City money. Mr. MacDonald indicated they will be looking at grants after the project is completed. Some tree replacement may be eligible for a 20% grant but those are on hold. Mr. Parkinson felt that the "quick answer" was that something can be done.

Ms. Stevens expressed her appreciation for all of the time that DPW and Underwood put into compiling their list. This process works very well.

Mr. Parkinson noted that tree #14 is not on the spreadsheet. Mr. Dolce believed that was a tree that was previously removed so he will correct that.

Mr. Dolce pointed out that 9A is shrubs to be removed and they will approach the homeowner to trim the hedges and maintain them. Attorney Loughlin spoke to the homeowner recently and he was concerned about them so it will be good to talk to him.

Mr. MacDonald asked if the next step would be to post the trees and have a public hearing and then make their decisions. Attorney Loughlin agreed with that.

Attorney Loughlin missed the site walk but he has looked at all of the trees. He has a more conservative philosophy than most of the Committee and would like to try to save more of the trees. He agrees with all of the recommendations that Underwood made but not with all of the recommendations that the Committee made. Rick Taintor, the Planning Director, sent him an article about the effects of large trees putting good things into the air about 170 times more than a new planting. He would have made a different recommendation on a number of the trees but they can see what happens at the public hearing.

Mr. Dolce confirmed that the project will start in July.

Mr. Adams asked about short stubs on Wibird Street. Mr. Dolce confirmed those were done previously on the 3A contract.

4. **Tree Planting.** Ms. Stevens has kept these lists up to date. There are two lists: Todd Croteau's list of 12 trees that were not planted and the 2012 list of requested trees. They drove around and clarified those lists and then they identified streets they wanted to work on and identified future potential planting sites.

Mr. Adams tried to splice them together and it's not quite ready because there were two decisions that need to be made about species. He based that on \$10,000, or 20 trees. Mr. Dupere did not feel that they would be able to find a dwarf pin oak as they are not out in the industry yet. There were two trees on Lincoln in question. They talked about the columnar maple that was small in diameter but a good sized tree. He further stated that they have put big trees in small spots all over the City and they are growing fine but eventually they will push out over the sidewalk. It would be better to get a well behaved tree in those spots. This is regarding 192 and 189 on Lincoln. Mr. Adams mentioned 303

Colonial where they had suggested a tulip tree but he wonders if a tree is even needed. They will review that. Two more trees same in from Mr. Croteau's list so he will update it again.

Attorney Loughlin asked if Mr. Croteau's list was finalized. Mr. Dupere thought it would be good to go around one more time and DPW can mark the location.

Mr. Adams indicated there were a couple of locations where the homeowners had requested trees but the Committee didn't think there was a valid reason on 200 Buckminster. They are right up against the woods and there is a tree in the front yard. Ms. Stevens also mentioned the home at the end of Pinehurst and Mr. Croteau agreed that he didn't think it was a priority.

Mr. Parkinson felt he could probably provide additional funding so that they didn't have to be restricted to how many trees they plant. Attorney Loughlin was concerned that they were taking down more trees than they were planting and they were losing ground.

Mr. Parkinson conformed that they need to finalize the list so they can go out to bid now. Mr. Adams felt they could have that done by next week. Nancy Carmer helps them put it out. They will finish the list and get it to Mr. Croteau.

5. **Tree Ordinance with City Attorney's 02/01/13 Comments.** Attorney Loughlin indicated that they have received the Tree Ordinance back from the Legal Department and it appears that all they did was make formatting changes. City Attorney Sullivan said that once the Commission decides they want to go forward, he will present it to the City Manager for presentation to the City Council.

Mr. Adams wondered if "Commission" the correct word as opposed to "Committee". Mr. Parkinson felt that Committee would probably be appropriate. Attorney Loughlin will check with the Legal Department on that.

Mr. Adams asked if the three year term limit is typical of other committees. Mr. Parkinson confirmed that all committees have expiration dates for their members and they are often reappointed at the end of their term.

Mr. Souto felt that "arboriculture" would be more appropriate than "agriculture".

Mr. Adams had some suggestions regarding serial commas and the wording regarding penalty fees.
Mr. Parkinson

Mr. Adams questioned the wording regarding penalty fees. Mr. Parkinson explained that the City tries to not be draconian with fines. They try to keep it reasonable in conjunction with replacement costs. Attorney Loughlin agreed that this wording was safer and it may not have the intended effect otherwise.

Mr. Dupere wanted to make sure the Chair had reviewed the recently passed tree ordinance law to make sure they were consistent.

6. **Discussion of Tree Pruning.** Attorney Loughlin indicated that several members have come across some tree pruning that was not done correctly. Ms. Stevens stated several members came upon some trees that had been pruned very badly, probably by the homeowner, as the pile of brush was behind the house. They need to go back to those trees and re-prune them. Ms. Stevens wondered if

people realize that a tree that is between the sidewalk and the road does not belong to them. Mr. Parkinson wondered if they could put something on the website or in the newsletter. Residents may not be aware of this. Ms. Stevens felt they could state that the trees between the sidewalk and the curbing are predominantly City owned trees and that it cuts down the life of the trees. Mr. Adams added that if pruning is warranted they should be encouraged to contact the City about it. Attorney Loughlin will send something to Mr. Parkinson for the newsletter.

Mr. Dupere indicated that they should include that they have a program that they may want to get involved in. They are going to try and go around to recently planted trees for pruning.

Ms. Stevens asked if they need to reach out to the specific homeowner and let them know that they should not prune the trees. Mr. Adams didn't think there would be anything to prune in the future so a letter wouldn't do any good.

Ms. Stevens thought as it gets closer to Arbor Day they could put something in the newsletter.

7. **Tree Map Information from City Planner Rick Taintor.** This was provided to the Committee members. The City GIS has a lot of capabilities and this might be something to think about in the future.

8. **Information on Decline of Old Trees Provided by Professor Donald Green.** This was provided to the Committee members.

9. **Old Business**

Ms. Stevens wanted to mention that there are notes on their tree planting lists that they don't want to lose. The dogwood at 700 Middle Street that is dead. Attorney Loughlin has been watching that tree and agreed it was stressed but not dead. The elm trees in front of The Rockingham need to be on the planting list.

Ms. Stevens talked about Mr. Croteau posting a tree on the corner of Lincoln and Middle which is dead. The address 391 Lincoln doesn't exist so they need to find out who requested a tree. One of Dan Rawlings' trees on Lincoln Avenue needs to be moved and replaced with something more appropriate because of the wires. On Park Street, the golden rain tree should be relocated further down the street. At 496 Lincoln, they were going to move the oak to Wibird and Lincoln, and the homeowners have requested a dogwood be planted in that spot.

10. **New Business.**

Mr. Souto wanted to mention that Tricia Edwards, of Wibird Street, sent a letter out to all residents.

Attorney Loughlin asked if there were any trees on Wibird on their list. Ms. Stevens mentioned a crabapple on the corner of Wibird and Williard. He asked if they had a Wish List for Wibird. Ms. Stevens confirmed there are 9 trees on their Wish list and some need to come down pretty quick.

Attorney Loughlin felt they can look at Williard Street in the fall.

Mr. Croteau mentioned that Tyleen Jousse that wants to donate a tree. He will call her back to discuss.

11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2013.

A motion to adjourn at 8:40 a.m. was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department