

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, July 10, 2013
Portsmouth City Hall, 1st Floor, City Manger's Conference Room**

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice Chairman; Peter Rice, 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. **Minutes of the May 8, 2013 and June 12, 2013 meetings**. Mr. Adams requested changes to the May Minutes.

Ms. Stevens made a motion to approve the May 8th and June 12 minutes, as amended. Mr. Croteau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **Tree Removal Requests:**

Middle School Perimeter Fence (2 trees by trailers) requested by the School Department Project Team – these are the two trees that did not get on the original list or posted last month. Tom Morgan had called Attorney Loughlin and stated he was glad they were being removed and preferred no trees directly behind his home.

Ms. Stevens made a motion to remove the trees. Mr. Rice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ranger Way (8 Trees due to road/sidewalk improvements) requested by DPW and Planning Department - Adam Cannon, of the Community Development Department, indicated they were present at the May meeting they came for some input on the removal of some trees and species selection prior to finalization of the plan. They had requested more diversity and less monoculturing of the trees, especially the ginkgos. They changed two ginkgos to oaks and they still have the Princeton Elm. They are still removing 8 trees.

Mr. Adams made a motion to remove the eight (8) trees. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

212 Miller Avenue requested by DPW – Allison Tucker, a representative of the 212 Miller Avenue Condo Association was present. She noted that this tree made the front page of the Herald. She hoped it could be salvaged but it is pretty much split down the middle. She had Cornerstone come out and look at it and they confirmed it would have to go. Given they are still in the end stages of the

sewer project, she asked when the tree would come out. It is a very big shade tree and she asked if the residents have any choice on the species replacement. They need shade on the block and they would like something tall. She also wanted to know what was being considered for the other two trees on the block that have already come down.

Mr. Dupere looked at the tree and confirmed it is split and two stems have come off of it. If they wanted to keep it through the fall, it's not going to get any worse. Part of the issue is the construction. The curb has already been set and the more work that is done in the area, the less likely they will have that stump removed. It might already be too late to remove the stump. The stump could be ground in place and the machine would eat up most of the debris but there are still root fibers below. An ideal planting spot would be to either side of that tree. Mr. Rice believes the sidewalk is to be removed and replaced. Ms. Tucker indicated she would like the tree to come out with the roots as well so they can plant something nice in there.

Mr. Rice indicated there is additional cost associated with that which would have to be assumed by the project. He would have to look at what they could do. Grinding is the regular tree program. Mr. Rice assured her that the City would work with her on this.

Mr. Dupere added that from a planting point of view, they don't go back into the neighborhoods and replant until the construction is completely done. Mr. Rice added that they can look at what it would take to get that done. Also, a replacement tree will take 30-40 years to come to the same stature.

Attorney Loughlin asked if the tree was salvageable. Mr. Dupere responded that it was a three stemmed tree and it was crushed out and basically two of the smaller stems peeled away. They have just been cut and left. The discussion was whether it could last until fall, which is can, but the construction may be past that point so the stump would have to remain. Mr. Rice confirmed that they are in the final stage of construction now.

Ms. Stevens summarized that it is their normal procedure to grind the stump and plant a few feet to the left or right so there is an added expense associated with pulling up an entire stump. To the extent that is possible, they should do that, but if not they will do the best they can.

Attorney Loughlin asked for a motion to remove the tree and DPW will review the situation to remove the stump before the new sidewalk is set and plant a replacement tree by next spring. Mr. Rice confirmed that the tree planting is driven by this committee. Ms. Stevens advised Ms. Tucker that she can provide tree species suggestions to the Committee and they will do what they can. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Stump Dump (for athletic Field Construction) requested by DPW – Terry Desmarias stated they had a site walk two weeks ago. They have posted the area and are looking to leverage the use and start preparing it for a recreational field. The intent is to build an NCAA compliant soccer field with 100 parking spaces. Almost all trees on site will be impacted and the trees were shown in green on his display. Some trees are along the property line which is not defined very well but they will define that as they move through the project. The area is bordered by Route 33, Islington Street, Plains Park.

Ms. Stevens understood the area had been posted and asked if they had put a big sign out front. Mr. Desmarias confirmed that they did. Ms. Stevens asked if anyone has contacted them about it. Mr. Croteau stated they have not heard from anyone.

Mr. Rice indicated they are starting to move dirt. Mr. Desmarias added that they had some permitting they had to get in place and then they will be ready to go. Ms. Stevens felt this is a great idea to have a field out there and she feels it is important for people to see the awesome field they are putting in from the road.

Mr. Rice explained that the railroad tracks have been abandoned and the trail project is moving forward with the State. Ms. Stevens mentioned there is a pond out there and they have talked about making a trail around it.

Attorney Loughlin asked if the entrance has to stay where it is. Mr. Rice responded that it has turning lanes to enter so it has been designed to handle the traffic coming in and by raising the elevation as you come out it will be safer to exit.

Mr. Adams missed the site walk but went out on his own and asked if the trees on the right as you go in are the only ones coming out. Mr. Desmarias indicated they were trying to give the approximate extent of the removal. To construct as proposed there is a new paved drive area through the site and it runs up against the property line. Mr. Adams asked if they envision quite a few trees remaining on the border. Mr. Desmarias envisioned very few of the trees remaining. Ms. Stevens added that there is a greenway between the project and the properties on the other side and there will be a nice buffer.

Mr. Rice made a motion to remove the trees as recommended. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

26 Elwyn Road requested by resident – Ms. Stevens noticed this tree is very close to the property line and well up on their lawn. Mr. Croteau stated that this woman is very concerned about the tree falling on her house.

Mr. Dupere made a motion to remove the tree. Mr. Croteau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

131 Stark Street requested by DPW – The right of way is right up against the houses. Ms. Stevens made a motion to remove the tree. Mr. Souto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

14 Wallis Road requested by resident – This tree is on a City cemetery and the City has custody of the cemetery. The property abutter has piled all of his brush in the cemetery. Mr. Souto asked if the proposal was to take the whole tree down rather than just the stem. Mr. Adams doesn't see any reason to take it down. The tree looked healthy and is leaning away from his house. Mr. Croteau stated that the residents want it down because of the hole in it.

Mr. Rice made a motion to postpone to the next meeting to allow the Committee to take a look at it. He doesn't see a good reason to take it down. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

213 Aldrich (east of driveway) requested by resident – Mr. Croteau stated this is the third tree in front of the house. They have already discussed these silver maples and they have taken some of the canopy down to reduce the stress on the branches. There are two trees in front of the house and one on the side of the driveway. Mr. Croteau will go in and thin all of the silvers out.

Mr. Rice made a motion to recommend trimming and monitoring of the trees. Mr. Souto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Ceres Street Update** – Mr. Croteau reported that Nancy Carmer has taken this over. They have quotes for a couple different styles of planters. Mr. Rice stated they are looking for public and private cooperation on this and it is moving forward. A selection has been made, a quote has been generated and Ms. Carmer has this information.

4. **Discussion of Progress on City Wide Inventory** – Corina Pappalardo is working as an intern this summer, working with Mr. Dupere on the tree inventory. She provided maps to the Committee members to show the progress they have made. They are about 32% done and they have done 34 of 106 miles maintained by City. She uses her computer and the City GIS program. She uses a laptop and she selects the tree, list the species, sub species, diameter class and she rates its health. There is also room to make notes. Mr. Rice stated she is coordinating with Jamie McCarthy and this information is being added to the City database. Mr. Dupere indicated that they can also add trees that are removed to this database. Mr. Souto asked when they expect to be done. Ms. Pappalardo responded that she currently has between 60-80 hours in her truck and has completed about 1/3 of the City so it should take another 4-6 weeks. Mr. Dupere confirmed they have grant money to cover her salary until September and they could get more funding if they want to continue after that. They are using this software because it is what the City uses for all of their other needs.

Mr. Rice asked if there will be a recommended maintenance plan coming out of this. Mr. Pappalardo stated it was very easy to update. Mr. Dupere indicated this will also show on a Citywide basis where they don't have trees. Right now the City is one-half maple trees. They are starting with very general categories. We are a very forested state so we have high tree canopy levels. If they have a catastrophic storm, they can figure out tree removal costs and replacement cost for the City. There are other programs that are specifically for tree inventories that they could move this information into in the future.

Mr. Adams asked how this will be updated. Mr. Dupere stated they will get the database done and as the City replants and adds trees they will put data into the program. Mr. Croteau added they have it set up the same way they do water mains. A change slip will be submitted and each removal will be reported.

Attorney Loughlin stated there is a big difference in the canopy of trees in Portsmouth since the '50's and '60's, a lot of which is due to DPW and also Site Review.

5. **Report on Children of American Revolution Elm** – Mr. Croteau confirmed this tree has been planted and watered and has a bag on it. It is between the road and the Fitz John Porter monument. Mr. Adams asked if a letter of thanks had been sent. Mr. Croteau will provide the information to Attorney Loughlin to send a letter.

6. **Update on Tree Ordinance** – City Attorney Sullivan has approved the document. Attorney Loughlin stated he will send it to the City Manager. Mr. Souto made a motion to adopt the final changes and send it along to the City Manager. Mr. Croteau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Update on Willard Avenue Tree Planting.** Mr. Croteau confirmed that Stratham Circle has the list and they have some work to do down there to grind stumps. The trees will be planted in the near future. Ms. Stevens reminded the committee that they should get letters out to all of the homeowners when that happens to remind them that the city needs their help with watering. Mr. Croteau confirmed all of these trees will get water bags. They purchased water bags for Planes Avenue and the rest of their plantings around town. They purchased around 60 bags.

8. **Final Report on Spring Tree Planting-** Mr. Croteau stated they still have some outstanding trees. They had a stump issue on Leavitt that they need to take care of before planting.

Mr. Adams asked if there was a way to communicate with the Nursery early on about their needs. He doesn't know why it is so hard to come up with a white oak but now they have lost the planting season and they don't have one. Mr. Croteau said they just have had a tough time finding a white oak.

9. **Old Business** – Ms. Stevens asked about the Alies Jeweler's Tree. Mr. Croteau confirmed that is coming down and they are replacing it. Attorney Loughlin noted that after it leafed out it looked much better. Mr. Dupere confirmed it has problems up in the cup, there are several broken limbs and it has root issues.

10. **New Business – Chestnut Street.** Mr. Dupere indicated they are running into issues with the Historical Resource folks getting trees or shrubs planted. The issue is they don't want any roots going into the soil. Their design person originally picked large trees. He is trying to work with them on this project. There will be some greenery as part of this project but they are not sure what it will be. This is a very sensitive project.

Mr. Todd advised the Committee that the tree in front of the library has been deemed a hazard. They do not want to wait until next month. Mr. Dupere made a motion to remove. Mr. Souto seconded the motion. The motion to remove passed unanimously.

Mr. Adams reported that the tree at 295 Thornton was heavily pruned by a man and now it has a lot of rot. He suggested it be advertised for removal. Mr. Croteau stated they have lost two lindens in that area. Mr. Adams confirmed this is a linden maple. Mr. Croteau stated he will look at it.

11. **Next Meeting – Wednesday, August 14, 2013**

A motion to adjourn at 8:20 a.m. was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department