

**TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY COMMITTEE
City of Portsmouth**

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, December 10, 2014
Portsmouth City Hall**

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; Leslie Stevens, A. J. Dupere, Dennis Souto; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works

Members Excused: Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman

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

1. Minutes of the November 12, 2014 Meeting

The minutes of the November 12, 2014 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Tree Removal Request

- Tree at Sagamore Creek Bridge

Mr. Rice stated that the side of an oak tree was stripped due to a bucket that went up its side and that there was no recourse to hold those responsible accountable for the damage. The construction people asked that it be removed entirely, and the property owner concurred. Ms. Stevens asked if the tree would be replaced, and Mr. Rice replied that there was no plan to do so but that they would consider it. He wasn't keen on replacing the tree with one that would get easily bruised. Mr. Dupere thought there might not be room or that it would be very tight on that particular side.

*Mr. Dupere made a motion to have the contractor remove the tree, which was seconded by Mr. Souto and **approved** by unanimous vote.*

3. Update on Removal of Diseased Red Pine Stands Through City by A.J. Dupere

Mr. Dupere stated that he would retrieve samples to see what the status of the trees was. There were no visible signs that they were dying, other than natural causes. He said it would take about a week and that they would monitor the situation.

4. Presentation by Harborcorp Landscaping

Mr. Pat Carroll, landscape architect on the project, was present to speak, along with Mr. John Chagnon, and he showed the Committee detailed plans. He reviewed the site layout and noted that there were plans for a roundabout at the intersection of Market and Russell Streets. He stated that a green space would eventually be developed as well. Mr. Croteau said that he preferred to see a diversity of trees rather than one or two species. Mr. Carroll said he would be glad to work with them

and that they would plant mostly street trees along the development. He proposed tree grates and rakes where the sidewalks were narrow and said they would create a 90-degree intersection. Mr. Carroll also stated that it was a mixed-use project. Mr. Rice noted that there were some changes in a few areas compared to what was shown on the layout and said that TAC had questioned some planters, so he thought a few big trees could be added. He remarked that there was a lot of ledge in one area that may have to be removed to get soil for mature trees. Mr. Carroll replied that they would be excavating and doing a lot of ledge removal.

Chairman Loughlin asked for the reason for the planters in the front of the development. Mr. Rice stated that they would be curbed raised bed planters. He wanted to keep the space more open, with trees and benches, and populating the space would involve a lot of discussion. Mr. Carroll suggested a bike-share program, but Mr. Rice thought that was unlikely to happen. Chairman Loughlin asked about the square footage, and Mr. Carroll said it was 50x150 feet. Mr. Rice thought it was a good opportunity for some big trees. Mr. Carroll stated that the idea for the planters originated to ensure that the pedestrians crossed at a certain point. Mr. Rice said there would be a 3-way stop sign.

Mr. Dupere noted that Sweet Gums had very large fruit that ended up everywhere, and the City did not allow them. He said Mr. Carroll could get sterile ones, but it would be impossible to get all sterile ones. He believed that a lot of people were against fruit-bearing trees because animals were attracted to them, and he told Mr. Carroll that he could help pick out some trees. Mr. Rice felt that one particular tree might have to be removed due to the cross sign.

Underground and overhead power was discussed. Mr. Carroll stated that the plan would continue to evolve and that they would submit a plan to TAC the following week. Mr. Dupere asked about the timing, and Mr. Rice said they were hoping to get it through the Planning Department, so it could possibly be February. Construction could begin in the summer.

Mr. Croteau asked about a section that he thought looked empty. Mr. Rice said the plan was to widen the Maplewood Avenue side. Chairman Loughlin said that the road could be narrowed, and Mr. Rice thought it was a tough area due to the railroad tracks, so they may have to keep it as wide as they could. He suggested some planting along the retaining wall to soften it and mentioned a lattice. Mr. Carroll said they had no real estate to work with on that side; they were at the minimum 12-foot clearances and couldn't pull everything in. Mr. Rice thought they could take up 3-4 inches along the concrete and advised softening that side of the building. Mr. Carroll said that the wall would have a texture. Mr. Chagnon stated that it could be augmented once the sidewalk was done. Mr. Carroll stated that a roof garden would wrap around and access off the parking garage. It would be a public roof garden similar to Highline Park in New York City and would be linear, with space for benches and landscaping, and would look out toward North Church. Mr. Carroll mentioned a 'tree sculpture' with stone fruit. Ms. Stevens asked Mr. Carroll if he could come back, and Mr. Carroll said he could attend the January meeting with an updated version. Ms. Stevens thought Mr. Croteau's question about certain trees, like Lindens and London Planes, was a good one and wanted to know what would happen with those, thinking it would be helpful to fill that section of the plan in for the next meeting. Mr. Carroll stated that they were also doing work on the Sheraton side of Russell Street, so some larger oaks would have to be removed and they would replant trees and do some landscaping to buffer. Ms. Stevens asked if anything was going near the new building, but Mr. Carroll wasn't sure. Mr. Rice asked whether the property owners were aware that Whole Foods would be there and that they would

be looking at the back side of the store. Mr. Chagnon said he didn't think so. Mr. Carroll said that the back of the building would have fenestration and some architecture to it.

Mr. Chagnon referred to 64 Maplewood and asked whether the Committee wanted a uniform streetscape. Mr. Rice stated that he preferred to use the same trees and make a uniform look. Chairman Loughlin thought that the critical thing was the vertical and horizontal tree guards. Mr. Croteau said he liked the raised beds. Mr. Rice thought raised beds were great but was concerned that they would narrow the walkway. If there were less than 8 feet of clearance, he preferred the flat grate with the tree guard. Chairman Loughlin jokingly stated that it was harder to hit a tree with a raised bed with a sidewalk plow than it was to hit the grate.

Ms. Stevens asked Mr. Chagnon if he was redoing the VFW, and Mr. Chagnon replied that it would be all new construction. Mr. Carroll told the Committee that he had enough information to update his latest plan, and Chairman Loughlin told Mr. Carroll that he could return when he had something definitive. Mr. Carroll asked how the Planning Department tied in with the Committee, and Chairman Loughlin said the Committee was more advisory. Mr. Chagnon asked if he could come back after conditional approval, and Mr. Rice said that the Committee typically liked it to go to the Planning Department with their blessing.

5. Suggestions for Sagamore Creek Bridge Plantings

Mr. Rice said he thought the bridge would be done by December 21. Chairman Loughlin asked whether any of the suggestions they had discussed for the bridge were made. Mr. Rice stated that he would have the bridge personnel return to ensure that the plantings looked good.

6. Report on Results of September 2nd Site Selection Trip by Committee on Locations for Spring 2015 Plantings (Report Attached & Tree Species List for Bidding Attached)

Chairman Loughlin stated that Vice-Chairman Adams had done a list of necessary trees, which he thought was helpful, and he verified that the Committee members had seen the list. He said he thought that Vice-Chair Adams had protested the Chinese elm during the site walk, and if so, he had told Vice-Chair Adams that he could appeal it at the next meeting. He mentioned that the Chinese elms were at Market Square, and Mr. Dupere said that they were shorter and upright. Ms. Stevens thought it had some 'funky' issues. Mr. Dupere said they didn't have the American elm stature and they had been using crossbreeds successfully in some areas. Mr. Croteau thought that the Valley Forge trees in front of the Rockingham were doing well. Mr. Dupere asked about space issues, and Chairman Loughlin said he didn't think there were wires in the way. Mr. Dupere said they could check it out if Vice-Chair Adams wanted to still pursue it. Chairman Loughlin said they had approximately 50 trees and asked what the next step would be. Mr. Croteau noted that there was an issue at the corner of School and Spinney Streets. Chairman Loughlin stated that they would follow up on it.

Relating to the Caliper, Chairman Loughlin asked what they normally asked for in bids. Mr. Croteau said they asked for 2-1/2 to 3 inches. Mr. Dupere said they would have to check the list against a few species that were out there currently and that they had a few backups. Mr. Croteau wanted to expand the list to their preferred trees to be able to use throughout the year. Mr. Rice thought there would be upcoming opportunities to plant the trees.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether or not they would be ready to go to bid by the next meeting. Mr. Croteau stated that they would be ready to bid. Chairman Loughlin stated that, on behalf of Vice-Chair Adams, they would have the bid ready for final approval by the next meeting.

Mr. Rice mentioned the urban tree issue that involved a lot of soil and chemistry, and he suggested that the Committee might consider doing some chemistry studies.

7. Old Business

Ms. Stevens asked about the tree on the City Hall property that hung over a property owner's space that he wanted removed. Chairman Loughlin stated that one tree had already been removed and that he wasn't sure about the tree in question because it depended on their budget.

8. New Business

None was presented.

9. Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 14, 2015

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary