

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, April 8, 2015
Portsmouth City Hall**

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

Members Excused: A. J. Dupere

Chairman Loughlin called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. **Minutes of the March 11, 2015 meeting.**

The minutes of the March 11, 2015 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

2. **Tree Removal Requests: None.**

3. **Status of Bids for Spring 2015 Tree Planting List.**

Mr. Croteau stated that he received a bid from Stratham Circle Nursery and that he would reach out to other vendors. He noted that there were trees that could not be procured, including a sycamore maple, a Canadian plum, a European larch, a European beech, and a dogwood pagoda, and he suggested that alternative trees be explored. Chairman Loughlin asked about prices, and Mr. Croteau replied that they were competitive and similar to past years. Chairman Loughlin asked whether Stratham Circle Nursery had done most of the planting over the last few years, and Mr. Croteau agreed. Vice-Chair Adams mentioned that some other bidders felt it wasn't worth their time to price things out because they never got chosen. He asked how soon the Committee could get the planting done, and Mr. Rice said they had quotes and could meet the June 1 deadline. Vice-Chair Adams asked if the Committee wanted suggestions for substitute trees, and Mr. Croteau agreed. Ms. Stevens suggested that the Committee figure out where the trees were meant to go. Mr. Croteau noted that there were options for a wide variety. Chairman Loughlin requested that the options be emailed to the Committee and also asked for a list of sites. Ms. Stevens offered to help Mr. Croteau with the list and suggested that the Committee weigh in on different species after the list was sent to everyone.

4. **Discussion re Arbor Day.**

Chairman Loughlin stated that Ms. Nancy Carmer had told him that Portsmouth was again named the Tree City for the year and had asked that an Arbor Day celebration take place. He stated that he received a call from Cornerstone saying that they would organize it and also do a Volunteer Day at Prescott Park. They would also honor Mr. Jeff Ott by having a tree planting ceremony for him. Mr. Rice said that his staff would participate and noted that it would be on April 24. Ms. Stevens

wondered if the middle school students would participate. Mr. Rice noted that the Student Council representative had requested that they do something to improve the park.

5. Future Tree Removal Requests:

277 Aldrich Road: Chairman Loughlin asked exactly where the removal site was. Vice-Chair Adams replied that the two trees in front of 277 Aldrich, near the top of the hill on the right going towards Islington Street, were in bad condition. He thought they might be silver maples, but Mr. Souto thought they were Norways. Chairman Loughlin suggesting discussing them at the May meeting.

Willow Tree at Clough Field, NW Corner near South Street: Mr. Croteau said that he received a request that the large tree be saved for its wood. Mr. Rice stated that the field was poorly configured and suggested expanding the dimensions to gain another 30 yards in the space between the back stop and the fence. He discussed low-cost adjustments to the fields to obtain functionality, suggesting that the Crack willow come down to allow for it. Chairman Loughlin suggested that the Committee consider just pruning the trees for the time being. Mr. Croteau said that he would look into it because it was an award-winning tree. Vice-Chair Adams noted that one large dead limb stuck out.

6. Update on Langdon Park.

Chairman Loughlin noted that Langdon Park was on the agenda a few months before but would not be the Arbor Day project for 2015, and he asked if anything was happening. Mr. Croteau replied that they hadn't done much work at that site and would have to wait until Memorial Day so that it could dry out. He suggested that the Committee consider putting new trees on the site. Vice-Chair Adams stated that he, Mr. Souto, Mr. Croteau and Ms. Stevens could visit the site and discuss it. It was agreed that they would do so on Wednesday, April 15 at 8:00 a.m. Ms. Stevens stated that she would send an email on what had been previously discussed to everyone.

7. Old Business – None.

8. New Business.

Mr. Steve Pesci of 200 Thornton Street stated that he contacted Mr. Dupere in March about re-pruning the two maples trees in front of his house. In 2010, the Committee had pruned the crowns and had suggested that it be done again in 3-4 years, so Mr. Pesci requested permission to have Urban Tree Service or someone else reshape the trees at his expense. Mr. Croteau replied that he would have his in-house staff do it because Thornton Street was a 'street tree'. Ms. Stevens noted that Mr. Dupere was going to look at one of the trees to assess its health and would probably do so before the pruning.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved that the pruning be approved, and Mr. Rice seconded the motion. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

Mr. Rice noted that on March 13, there would be a meeting for the Adopt-a-Spot program at the library at 5:00 p.m. and that they had partnered with the Gardening Club, who was interested in discussing pollinators that would broaden the scope of Adopt-a-Spot. Ms. Stevens suggested a Monarch Way Station, which was planting specifically for monarchs on their migration to Mexico. Mr. Souto said

that he would talk to Ms. Deb Chag from the Gardening Club about it. He also noted that Ms. Chag would be a speaker at the meeting. Mr. Rice said he had invited Piscataqua personnel as well and that Mr. Woodman from Outreach was spearheading it.

Mr. Rice also stated that Mr. John Murtha had agreed to adopt the new Harborwalk Park project. There were concerns about it not being fertilized enough, so his group would do soil testing. Mr. Croteau asked if the Committee had a preference for the type of bark mulch that would be used. Ms. Stevens said that she preferred a darker color than the bright red mulch, and Mr. Souto agreed. Mr. Croteau noted that there were competing ideas on what was acceptable and esthetically pleasing. They had used the brown Hemlock mulch, but people felt that the black mulch was a superior product as well as more esthetically pleasing. Chairman Loughlin asked about the mulch on Marcy Street. Mr. Rice said he thought the darker mulch had a better nutrient quality than the red.

Ms. Stevens suggested that the Committee meet to prune the newer trees that were planted in the last few years. Mr. Rice asked how the cherry trees were, and Ms. Stevens replied that they looked okay. Mr. Souto suggested that the Committee prune the newer trees on April 15, and Ms. Stevens said they could do some trees but that it would be a multi-day process. Chairman Loughlin asked whether the trees on Wibird and Union Streets would be finished within the year, and Mr. Rice stated that the contractor planned to do clean-up and complete the paving. Mr. Croteau noted that Corin, the Public Works "tree man", had recently gotten certified as an arborist. \

Vice-Chair Adams asked Mr. Croteau whether the red cedar was on his list for transplanting, and Mr. Croteau said that it was. Mr. Rice said he would look into it. Vice-Chair Adams also asked whether there was an uptake in tree removal requests for April and advocated delaying the removals until the birds and other animals finished their nesting rituals, suggesting that it be done in the fall or late winter. Chairman Loughlin agreed and thought that perhaps August would be a good start date. Ms. Stevens asked about the sycamore, and Mr. Croteau said that the crown had been pruned. Mr. Souto brought up the trees in the Worth Lot that had been planted the previous season and said he had spoken with a landscaper who had suggested tree grates because she was concerned about the compaction around them. Mr. Croteau stated that the grates had already been ordered.

Mr. Souto also asked about the status of the rails trail by the swamp. Mr. Rice replied that the State was negotiating with B&M Railroad to purchase the land and wanted to access areas in the bog to put in a municipal drinking well to replace the one lost at Pease. They would leverage a section of it to develop a path. Ms. Stevens asked if the path would be one that people could walk on, and Mr. Rice said that it would be part of the bicycle path from Seabrook.

9. Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 13, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary