

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

**MINUTES**

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, June 10, 2015  
Portsmouth City Hall**

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

**Members Excused:** None.

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

**1. Minutes of the May 13, 2015 Meeting.**

*Vice-Chair Adams moved to approve the May 13, 2015 minutes, and Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

**2. Tree Removal Requests:**

Borthwick Avenue/Portsmouth Regional Hospital Parking Lot – Request by Eversource.

The request was that the topped-off Honeylocust trees be removed and replaced with appropriate plantings. Chairman Loughlin said they looked okay, and Ms. Stevens agreed, asking whether the trees were growing into the power lines. Mr. Croteau said that what why they were topped off.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to remove the trees and replace them, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

364 Colonial Drive – Large split in trunk.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Croteau seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

391 Colonial Drive – Resident request to possibly cut City tree down.

The resident Mr. John Donahue stated that he was concerned about people passing underneath the tree, so he was requesting that the City tree, which hung over his driveway, be cut down because of high winds, aphids, drippings on vehicles, and bee, ant and spider infestations. He was also concerned about the tree's root structure raising the sidewalk. Mr. Dupere noted that the sidewalk was raised by the root structure, but the tree was healthy. He said that there was a series of lindens in that area and that the tree had a big crown and was very close to the corner. Mr. Donahue's mother, Ms. Carol Edwards, stated that it was difficult for people to be in the front yard due to the aphids, the mold, and

the raised tree roots. Chairman Loughlin asked if spraying had been successful on other trees, and Mr. Croteau agreed, noting the tree on Echo Avenue. Ms. Stevens asked if the Committee could look at the tree. Mr. Dupere stated that insects were easy to control and that the tree could be sprayed with chemicals, but said the surrounding lindens could also be infested. Chairman Loughlin asked whether Corin could investigate it. Mr. Croteau said they could spray it. Chairman Loughlin told the residents that the Committee was reluctant to cut down healthy trees and that the City arborist would look into it.

*Ms. Stevens moved to continue the tree request to the July meeting and in the meantime, have Corin inspect the tree and spray it for aphids. Vice-Chair Adams seconded the motion. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

#### 36 Marston Avenue – Potential impact from road construction.

The residents were present. Dean Plager stated that they had a white ash in their front yard that was under the power lines. The tree had been unhealthy for years, and he thought that the new sewer project would go through it and cut through its roots. He added that their sump pump hookup to the storm drain would also go by the tree, so he felt that it was a good time to remove the tree and replace it and also to better position it in the front yard.

Mr. Croteau stated that the sewer project would have an 8-foot deep trench about 2-3 feet off the tree, and the tree might slide into the hole. Vice-Chair Adams said that it seemed the tree was clearly failing and there was evidence of internal rot at its bottom, so even though the tree was still alive, the Committee would just delay the process by not removing it. Mr. Ray Pezzullo, a City of Portsmouth employee, stated that most of the tree was leaning toward the street.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to remove the tree, and Mr. Croteau seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

The resident asked whether the City would help him replace the tree, and Mr. Pezzullo agreed. Mr. Dupere noted that the tree would be replaced after the construction.

#### 1160 South Street – Resident request. They believe the tree is unhealthy.

Vice-Chair Adams stated that the tree was dead. Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to remove the tree, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

Mr. Souto noted that there was another ash tree on the other side of the driveway that appeared to be dead and suggested that Mr. Croteau look at it.

#### 38 Georges Terrace – Resident request. They believe the tree is unhealthy.

It was confirmed that the tree request was an input error.

#### Union Street Tree Planting Request

Mr. Michael Frandzel, a Union Street resident, asked what the process was to get a tree and whether he could choose it. Mr. Rice noted that there were several requests for trees on Union Street. Mr.

Pezzullo stated that his purpose for being at the meeting was to review the topic and suggested a site walk to review appropriate trees and locations. He also said that residents of Union Street should call Mr. Brad Charette, the field representative. Chairman Loughlin said that he didn't want certain trees under wires and suggested that Mr. Frandzel confer with Mr. Pezzullo after the meeting. Mr. Rice also noted that Ms. Diane Stradling was adamant about being notified as to what would be planted in front of her house and that he told her that Mr. Pezzullo would review a list from the Committee with her.

### **3. Update on 2015 Spring Planting.**

Mr. Croteau stated that the spring planting would start that day. Vice-Chair Adams stated that he was making a plea for early planting, and Mr. Croteau replied that it wouldn't help due to the drought. He added that Corin was checking prior year plantings and placing water bags on them. Chairman Loughlin asked if there were stakes where the trees would be planted, and Mr. Croteau agreed. He noted that a linden had come down on 262 Thornton Street and they didn't want to replant a tree at that site. Mr. Souto confirmed that the tree between 1048 and 1030 South Street would be replaced and asked whether early plantings could be done in 2016, and Mr. Croteau replied that it would depend on the weather, noting that the seasons seemed to be shifting toward the fall. Chairman Loughlin suggested that the goal be early May rather than June. Mr. Rice agreed that it should be no later than the end of May, but that it again depended on weather and several other factors.

### **4. Tabled Request for Removal of Trees at 523 Dennett Street.**

Mr. Croteau stated that the request was for a group of cedars to be removed. Vice-Chair Adams asked how they knew that it was the white cedar roots going into the sewer and not roots from the crab apple, and Mr. Croteau said it was because the sewer was right under the white cedars. Vice-Chair Adams noted that there was one dead tree, and Mr. Croteau said the problem was a defective pipe and not a defective tree. Chairman Loughlin said that Ms. Stevens had previously recommended that the trees not be removed and that the dead tree be looked at. Ms. Stevens suggested that the Committee work with the owner because the issue would not go away due to other tree roots growing there. Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Croteau to meet with the neighbor.

*The motion for Mr. Croteau to meet with the neighbor and discuss it was moved by Vice-Chair Adams and seconded by Ms. Stevens. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

### **5. Update on Status of New Plantings in Atlantic Heights.**

Ms. Stevens replied that all the trees by the ball field were affected, not just the new plantings, and that the red maples had holes in all their leaves. She suggested that the Committee do a site visit. She also noted that the tops of maples in people's yards on Kearsarge were dying but didn't know if they were City trees. Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Souto and Ms. Stevens to look at the trees, and they agreed.

### **6. Update on Status of New Plantings on Sagamore Avenue.**

Chairman Loughlin said that the trees looked great and asked whether loam or additives were added when trees were planted. Mr. Dupere said that the City usually put a 50-50 mix of good and poor soil and typically did not put trees in a box because they would eventually grow out. They put in a gravelly

mix because the roots would turn and grow in that area. The Committee further discussed it, and Chairman Loughlin said that he agreed with Mr. Dupere that a mix of soil would be helpful and encouraged it in the spring planting.

**7. Report on Tree Request at 3S Art Center.**

Chairman Loughlin stated that it had been decided that the tree would be relocated.

**8. Discussion of Relocation of 3 Crab Apple Trees at 136 Wibird Street.**

Vice-Chair Adams asked whether the process was to move the trees and remove the sidewalk. Mr. Rice said that the trees, which were close to the sidewalk, should be cut down and replaced with new ones because the City shouldn't have to deal with the sidewalk issue. The other option was to leave the trees and have the sidewalk heave eventually, and they would adjust the sidewalk. Vice-Chair Adams noted that there were crab apple trees on Lincoln Avenue that had been close to the sidewalk for half a century, so he asked what the problem was. Mr. Rice replied that the resident had said the trees were not symmetrical.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to have the trees monitored, and Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

**9. Updated List of Tree Removal Requests – January, 2006 through May, 2015 (by Date)**

Chairman Loughlin stated that his assistant sent out a list of tree removal requests to the Committee.

**10. Updated List of Tree Removal Requests – January, 2006 through May, 2015 (by Street)**

Chairman Loughlin again stated that his assistant sent out a list of tree removal requests.

**11. Request for removal of forsythia at Middle Road and South Street**

Mr. Rice stated that he had held an impromptu meeting with two residents and had told them that he would advocate for the removal of the forsythia. It was a site line issue and not a good spot for a large forsythia bush. He also said that the road would have to be reconfigured, but in the interim, he recommended that the bush go. Ms. Stevens asked whether it would be replaced with something else, and Mr. Rice agreed, saying that it should be salt-tolerant and small. Chairman Loughlin asked whether there was an objection to removing the forsythia bush, and there was not.

**12. Discussion of policy on “wild vs. groomed” areas in major city parks.**

Chairman Loughlin stated that Vice-Chair Adams had raised the issue of the south side of Langdon Park having a little bit of everything, including box elder, forsythia, and thorn bushes, and thought that someone would never actually create something like that in a park. He said it looked unsightly and asked why it would be kept there. Ms. Stevens said that they had discussed whether some parks were more groomed or include wild areas and that Corin had asked for direction, thinking it would be helpful to understand the expectations of what was okay to leave or remove.

Mr. Rice said that, as far as allocation and resources, it would be helpful to know the level of expectation regarding maintenance levels because they were inundated by residents who felt that their green space was not maintained by the City. Chairman Loughlin asked whether it would be done on a park-by-park basis. Mr. Rice agreed that it would be maintained at the beginning, then at some point, areas would be identified for weekly/annual mowing, and so on. The City knew what their staff should do and where, which served as a tool to show the policy if people complained. Ms. Stevens asked whether, as a municipality, they wanted designated areas that were wildlife-friendly and didn't need maintenance so that people wouldn't have expectations. Mr. Rice agreed that it would be helpful.

Vice-Chair Adams said that the Committee had a list of significant parks in Portsmouth and felt that Haven, Langdon, and Goodwin Parks should be groomed. Mr. Croteau said there should be documentation on what the parks were meant to personify to the community. Mr. Rice said it would be a worthwhile exercise and that the interns could do a map and brief description of each park to denote the level of expectation in terms of maintenance. Mr. Frandzel suggested that the Committee submit a newspaper article to inform the public of park maintenance expectations, and Chairman Loughlin added that it could also be placed on the website. Mr. Rice thought it was a great suggestion.

### **13. Old Business**

There was no old business.

### **14. New Business.**

Mr. Dupere stated that Mr. Chris Rose from the middle school wanted to plant a magnolia tree for the retiring principal and asked whether it could be donated by the City. Ms. Stevens replied that Mr. Rose didn't want the tree donated and that she would talk to him. Ms. Stevens asked when the Gateway project would begin, and Mr. Rice replied that it was moving at a glacial pace. Mr. Souto mentioned his email about the downtown trees, saying that some looked good and a few dead ones had already been cut. Ms. Stevens asked what happened to the lopped-off ones, and Mr. Croteau replied that he had cut them off at a 4-foot height until they could be replaced.

Chairman Loughlin stated that he had read an article sent by Vice-Chair Adams about problems with London plane trees and noted that the ones in Portsmouth were doing fine.

### **15. Next Meeting on Wednesday, July 8, 2015.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Recording Secretary