

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, October 12, 2016
Portsmouth City Hall**

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Department of Public Works; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; Leslie Stevens; A. J. Dupere; Dennis Souto; Joan Walker; and Dan Umbro. City Arborist Corin Hallowell was also present.

Members Excused: None.

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

1. Minutes of the September 14, 2016 Meeting

The September 14, 2016 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

Two Norway Maples – Behind City Hall (Requested by DPW)

Mr. Hallowell stated that the two mature Norway trees were decayed and one had extensive decay and that he felt that it was justified to remove them.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. Mr. Souto moved that the trees be removed, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

One Crab Apple – Commerce Avenue

Mr. Hallowell stated that over 50% of the tree was dead. Mr. Rice said the tree had a significant amount of dead branches and needed to be replaced.

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

One Norway Maple – West Side of Goodwin Park (Requested by DPW)

Mr. Hallowell stated that the City Electrician was installing an electric panel, or photocell, to control the park lights, and that the location was covered by the Norway maple and shrubs. He said it was difficult to install the photocell with the tree in the way. Mr. Rice asked how the tree's health was. Mr. Hallowell said it was good and that he had spoken to the person in charge about relocating the sensor but felt that it could turn into a large project.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether it was good tradeoff. Mr. Rice said Public Works had received concerns about safety and were trying to balance safety for the residents versus the tree. He said the park needed an extensive makeover and suggested that the Committee review the necessary changes. He also suggested that a comprehensive pruning be done and that the panel be put in another location.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. Mr. Rice moved that the request be tabled to the next meeting so that the issue could be reviewed in more detail. Mr. Dupere seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

One Norway Maple – 47 Emery Street

Mr. Hallowell said the small maple was very decayed and that it was located next to a school bus company. The employees were not able to park in that location because they were concerned that the tree would fall over.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. Ms. Walker moved that the tree be removed, and Vice-Chair Adams seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Discussion of Available Tree Planting Stock for 2017 with Rick Simpson of Rolling Green Nursery

Rick Simpson of Rolling Green Nursery was not present to speak to the request.

4. Request to Discuss Location of Newly Planted Trees on Hunking Street by Peter Morin

The citizens Peter Morin and Carol Yerden of 49 Pickering Street were present and said they were concerned about the impact of the trees on their water view. Ms. Yerden read a letter to the Committee in which she expressed how so many water views in the City had been lost in the past years and the fact that their neighbors had not been given the opportunity to provide feedback about trees being planted. She asked that the trees on Hunking Street be transplanted to a different location.

Chairman Loughlin confirmed that Mr. Hallowell had discussed the trees with one of the neighbors. Mr. Hallowell said he discussed the issue with Mr. Morin and another neighbor and that several of the neighbors had given him positive feedback. Chairman Loughlin noted that Mr. Hallowell previously indicated that the linden trees could be pruned so that the water view would not be impacted. Mr. Hallowell said the lower limbs could be pruned as the trees grew but that it was difficult to do in the meantime, and that there was evidence that the trees improved the overall health of the residents and provided energy savings. He said he could work with the trees over the coming years.

Ms. Yerden asked how the City chose tree planting locations, and Mr. Dupere explained it. Mr. Morin asked whether citizens had a say in whether or not trees should be planted in certain locations. Mr. Rice said he took people's concerns into consideration 99% of the time but agreed that it was a valid concern and said the Committee should come up with an approach on how to address the issue. Chairman Loughlin said he had mixed feelings when the issue first arose and was reluctant to remove a healthy tree but also agreed that planting a tree that impacted a water view was something the Committee had to think about.

Chairman Loughlin suggested that Mr. Hallowell and other Committee members look at the viewpoint and report back at the November meeting.

5. Update on 391 Colonial Drive Tree Safety Analysis (Report provided)

Chairman Loughlin told the Committee that he sent them copies of the Tree Safety Analysis. The Portsmouth resident Carol Edwards of 144 Spinnaker Way said she and her husband were present because they were concerned about the tree being removed, noting that some of its branches came down during the last storm.

Chairman Loughlin said the detailed risk assessment was done on October 7, 2016 by an independent consulting arborist who determined the tree to be of low risk to life and property. He said the arborist studied the tree in great detail using industry standards and found no reason to remove the tree from a safety point of view, at a cost to the City of over \$600. Ms. Edwards said it wasn't comforting for her and the families who lived near the tree. Chairman Loughlin said the Committee had to look at a City-wide standard and that it applied to every City tree. He said they could not justify removing the tree in light of the report.

Chairman Loughlin concluded that, in light of having judged all the facts and having the official Tree Safety Analysis, removing the tree was not justified.

6. 2017 Suggested Tree Planting Sites (List Provided)

Chairman Loughlin referenced the list that the subcommittee put together. Mr. Croteau noted that another request had come in from One Denise Drive. Chairman Loughlin also noted that there was a request from 139 Willard Avenue for a replacement tree. Mr. Hallowell said he had spoken to the citizen Brian Ratay, and that he and his neighbors wanted a tree planted when the stump was removed, anything but a sycamore. Chairman Loughlin said he sent Mr. Ratay a list of options and asked him to do a sketch of where he wanted the tree.

Ms. Stevens said there were two requests for tree plantings for two trees on Hillside Drive, at the north and south sides of Langdon Park. Chairman Loughlin said there was a request to replace the 'Snoopy' tree at the corner of South Street and New Castle Avenue.

7. Update on Suggested Trees for Borthwick Avenue – Eversource Request

Mr. Dupere noted that the honey locusts in the area had been topped over and over and that it was a good spot to put native shrubs. Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Croteau to communicate that fact to Eversource.

8. Species Selection for New Planting Sites (new section added to original agenda)

Vice-Chair Adams asked about species selection for the new planting sites and whether or not there was a timetable. Mr. Hallowell said the Committee was going to let residents know that the City was planning to plant trees and have them contact the City if they had questions. He suggested selecting a few different species for each site, and if the neighbors did not want them, the issue could be addressed. Mr. Hallowell said he would put a list of species together by the end of the week and said it would be good to mix the species and rotation on an annual basis to get more diversity.

Chairman Loughlin suggested having a subcommittee and contacting Rick Simpson of Rolling Green Nursery before the next meeting. He said he would work with Mr. Hollowell to come up with a primary species list for certain locations and that he would send a letter to everyone advising them to contact Mr. Simpson if they had questions.

Mr. Dupere asked whether the list could be placed on the website. Mr. Rice agreed but suggested putting a map together showing where the new trees would be located and then posting it on the website and advertising that the new planting list was up for viewing. If people had issues, they could contact Public Works. Mr. Hollowell suggested placing a stake and sign in the front of the property where a new tree would be planted, and if people had questions, they could contact Public Works.

9. Old Business

It was noted that three trees had been planted at State Street and two trees by Memorial Bridge.

The Portsmouth citizen Ted Ballard stated that he lived at 304 Islington Street at the western edge of Goodwin Park and that there were two large sugar maples along the stone wall that needed help. Mr. Hollowell said the two trees were between 150-200 years old and had serious deadwood, with one in mild decline. Chairman Loughlin suggested infusing them with fertilizer. Mr. Hollowell agreed, noting that they also needed pruning, root work and mulching. He said he thought it was an issue of nutrition and felt that the parking lot did not have a negative impact on the trees. Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Ballard whether the City could access his parking lot to work on the trees, and Mr. Ballard agreed.

Mr. Dupere said the logs at Peirce Island were getting soft and asked whether they would be saved. Mr. Hollowell said he thought the logs had gone past of the point of no return, although there were two elms that had wood that could be saved.

Vice-Chair Adams said the Committee had agreed to remove several trees at Langdon Park and asked what happened. Mr. Rice said there was sidewalk work scheduled in the next few weeks and that he would try to remove the trees before then.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 9, 2016.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary