

TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY COMMITTEE
City of Portsmouth

MINUTES

7:30 AM – Wednesday, March 9, 2016
Portsmouth City Hall

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

Members Excused: None.

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

1. Minutes of the February 10, 2016 Meeting.

*The February 10, 2016 minutes were **approved** by unanimous vote.*

2. Tree Removal Requests:

364 Colonial Drive

Mr. Croteau said the multi-stem tree was leaning heavily and appeared to be separating from the main trunk. Mr. Souto asked whether one stem could remain. Mr. Dupere said he didn't recommend it.

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

100 Greenleaf Avenue

Ms. Stevens said that the tree had a rotten base.

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

175 Hillside Drive

Mr. Croteau said the tree was becoming a safety hazard and recommended that it be removed.

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

200 Thornton Street

Mr. Croteau said his crew found two failing Norway maples during their planting site drive. Mr. Dupere said that the trees were getting worse. The property owner Steve Pesci was present and stated that he was sorry to see the trees go but was especially concerned about the one close to the corner because it had horizontal limbs ready to fall. He offered to help fund the replanting.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether the tree could be added to the 2016 Tree Removal List. Mr. Croteau said the list had not gone out for bid and that he wasn't sure he could augment it. Mr. Rice said if they could identify a price for the tree, they could perhaps do something. They further discussed it and decided that they would need a medium-sized tree.

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.*

127 Willard Avenue

The property owner Brian Ratay stated that the tree was almost dead and that branches had fallen from it four times or more during the winter. He advocated its removal and planting another tree.

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.*

100 Woodlawn Circle

Mr. Croteau said that the ash tree was actually located at 103 Hillcrest Drive.

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

3. Spring 2016 Tree Planting

Chairman Loughlin stated that he sent out the revised bid specifications and that they were in the Legal Department for finalization. Mr. Croteau noted that the Legal Department made a few modifications to the specs. Chairman Loughlin said the completion of planning was moved to May 13.

Vice-Chair Adams noted that no cultivar was specified for the Japanese tree lilacs. He suggested either Ivory Silk or Summer Snow.

Vice-Chair Adams also noted that the agreement still called for June 1 in the contract agreement and invitation bid sections and asked whether there was enough time to respond. Mr. Croteau said that, because it was a three-week bid, it would give him the month of April and half of May, which was ample time. Vice-Chair Adams asked about specifying the Japanese tree.

Ms. Stevens passed out copies of the Northern Nurseries document, and they discussed when the watering was done and whether it was specified. Chairman Loughlin suggested mentioning the watering issue in the bid so that people were aware of it. Mr. Croteau said they would do a pre-bid meeting concerning how they expected the trees to be planted so that anyone who bid on it would be

aware of their standard. He also said he would have staff on site when they planted. Mr. Rice said the Committee could attend the public meeting to view the process. Chairman Loughlin confirmed that the specification would be ready to go out when it came back from the Legal Department. Mr. Croteau noted that the specification had changed concerning the bare root planting of the stock. He said they tried it the previous year and it didn't work out, so he modified it by taking off two-thirds of the burlap. If the tree had to be adjusted, the burlap would hold the tree up.

4. Policy for Notifying Landowners of Watering Practices

Chairman Loughlin said that it would be helpful to know whether or not the public would water the trees, especially during a drought. Mr. Rice asked whether an information card was done. Ms. Stevens said they had done foundation brochures with an accompanying note. Chairman Loughlin said that Ms. Walker volunteered distribute the cards door-to-door, and he recommended that the notice be simple. He asked whether the names of tree owners were normally on tree lists, and Mr. Croteau replied that some of them were.

Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Croteau to get him a street list and said he would obtain names so that a mailing could be done. Ms. Walker suggested putting something in the Portsmouth Herald or asking tree owners to identify a neighbor to do the watering if they couldn't do it. Mr. Rice said they would do the Adopt-A-Spot outreach and perhaps an Adopt-A-Tree one. Chairman Loughlin recommended that they use the words 'if your schedule is such that you can't do it' rather than just implying that the owner didn't have the interest. Ms. Stevens asked whether all the new trees would have bags, and Mr. Croteau said that they would be directly injected with water. Ms. Walker recommended directing the public to the website so that they were aware of it.

5. Old Business

Ms. Stevens distributed copies of Mr. Dupere's official list of trees to plant. Mr. Dupere said it was an interactive list and that there was a template of it on line. Chairman Loughlin asked how the list compared to Vice-Chair Adams' list. Mr. Dupere said there were more trees on his list, and Ms. Stevens said that a lot of the trees were the same. Mr. Dupere emphasized how much easier the list would be to access on line because one could search and sort. He said it was important to remove a few trees from Vice-Chair Adams' list and place them on his list for species diversity.

6. New Business

Ms. Stevens asked Chairman Loughlin whether he sent a report to the City Council, and Chairman Loughlin said he emailed it out the day before.

Mr. Rice told the Committee that he was advertising for a City Arborist to augment Mr. Croteau's work and be in the management end of things. He said Corin would most likely be promoted to that position and then integrated into the Committee more. They would then work on filling Corin's utility mechanic position and add requirements to improve it. Vice-Chair Adams said it was a great idea.

Vice-Chair Adams asked about the replacement trees at Rockland Street, above the tennis courts. Mr. Croteau said they would get it done. Vice-Chair Adams then asked about the list of stumps to be ground. Mr. Croteau replied that 40 stumps were ground during the winter and asked Vice-Chair Adams to let him know if he had more. Vice-Chair Adams said there were two trees at 277 Aldrich Road that should be placed on the removal list. Mr. Croteau said he would look at them.

7. Next Meeting – Wednesday, April 13, 2016

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary