

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, April 13, 2016
Portsmouth City Hall**

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

Members Excused: Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman, A. J. Dupere

Chairman Loughlin was absent, and Vice-Chair Adams assumed his seat as Acting Chair and called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. Minutes of the March 9, 2016 Meeting.

*The March 9, 2016 minutes were **approved** by unanimous vote.*

2. Tree Removal Requests:

Langdon Street, downhill from McDonough (DPW Request)

David Desfosses of the Department of Public Works stated that there were multiple projects going on but that there was only one tree that they were requesting be removed. He noted that bids for the restoration of Brewster, Langdon and McDonough Streets were going out the following week for construction. He said the street was only 18 feet wide but would increase to 22 feet to provide on-street parking, and he also noted that three homes with extensive landscaping would be placed in the area, so the loss of one tree wouldn't make a substantial difference. Mr. Rice asked what kind of tree it was. He was told that it was a Norway.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved that the tree be removed, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

2 Sagamore Grove Road (DPW Request)

Mr. Croteau said that a large limb came off the tree and that the tree didn't stand a chance.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

277 Aldrich Road (DPW Request)

Acting Chair Adams said there were two trees, ones that he had earlier proposed for removal. Mr. Croteau said they had not gotten any better. Acting Chair Adams suggested waiting until the tree

leaved before removing it, but Mr. Croteau stated that the trees were a hazard, so Acting Chair Adams withdrew his suggestion.

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

Mr. Rice asked whether the homeowner would be interested in having replacement trees planted because it was a nice spot.

245 Essex Avenue – 4 Trees (DPW Request)

Mr. Croteau stated that one tree had a cavity. The City Arborist Corin Hallowell said there were a few sugar maples and one Norway, and that the smaller sugar maple had a cavity but he felt it could remain. He said the other trees were in decline. They further discussed the smaller, thin sugar maple, saying it could be left and inspected at a later date. They decided to remove the other three trees. Ms. Stevens confirmed that it was City property and that the owner agreed with the tree removals.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved that three trees be removed and that the tall, thin sugar maple stay. Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

1 Ashland Street (DPW Request)

Mr. Hallowell said the black cherry tree had extensive rot in the base and needed to be removed.

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

High Street and Garden Way

Acting Chair Adams asked about the honey locust on the corner of High Street and Garden Way. Ryan Flynn of the Department of Public Works stated that they were working on a project and that the sidewalks would be widened to make it easier for large trucks to turn, so there would not be much room left for a tree. Mr. Rice said the hotel was on board with the removal. Ms. Stevens asked how old the tree was, and Mr. Rice said it was ten years old. He asked whether it could be replanted. Ms. Stevens said it was probably too big. She asked whether there was anyplace else to plant a tree in that area. Mr. Souto said it was a tough spot for trees to be planted. Acting Chair Adams asked whether the hotel had set up the configuration, and Mr. Desfosses said the Planning Board had approved it. Acting Chair Adams said it was a poor plan. Mr. Rice said he wasn't against considering different spots to put trees downtown, but he said the tree removal would improve pedestrian accessibility and traffic safety. Ms. Stevens said it would be nice to see more trees planted in that area.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to remove the honey locust, and Mr. Rice seconded.*

Acting Chair Adams said he was in New York City recently and had noted that there were several mature trees on cross streets in environments that didn't look any more hospitable than the corner of

High Street and Garden Way. He said there had to be a solution and thought that the failure to remove burlap and other factors might be the reason. Mr. Hallowell said it started with proper planting.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Hanover Street

Mr. Flynn said the lilac tree was part of the restoration plan, which would include widening the sidewalk and building a retaining wall. He said the lilac would be in the middle of it. Mr. Rice said the utility poles would be removed and a wider pedestrian way would be created. Ms. Stevens asked whether there was room for planting boxes, and Mr. Rice said he wouldn't advise it.

Martha McGovern, a neighbor, noted that the posting had not been up for very long and thought that more neighbors would be at the meeting if they had seen it.

Mr. Rice moved to postpone the item to the May meeting so that the public could be made aware of the tree removal. Mr. Souto seconded.

Ms. McGovern said she'd like to see the tree bloom one more time, and the Committee agreed that the tree would be removed afterwards. Mr. Rice said they could try to replant the tree and asked the Committee members to consider appropriate spots that they could discuss at the next meeting.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Spring 2016 Tree Planting Update

Order Status

Mr. Croteau stated that his meeting with the seven contractors went well and that the unanimous concern was getting everything planted by May 13. He said that the contractors requested that it be pushed out a few weeks. Mr. Croteau suggested completing planting by June 3.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Walker moved that the completion of planting be changed to June 3, 2016, and Ms. Stevens seconded.*

Acting Chair Adams asked what the Committee could do to keep the issue from reoccurring. Mr. Croteau said he thought the cold snap might have made the contractors nervous. Mr. Hallowell agreed that it was weather-dependent. Acting Chair asked whether there was discussion about species. Mr. Croteau said they had only discussed bare root or burlap, and that the contractors wanted to simply plant and go. He said the City would pay a premium for the trees to be planted correctly.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Replacement Trees

Mr. Croteau said he had a list that would be further formulated. He also noted that they had requests from residents for replacements of trees that were doing poorly. Mr. Souto offered to help Mr. Hallowell identify the trees that needed replacing.

4. Old Business

Updated Recommended Species List

Acting Chair Adams asked whether there was any information regarding species. Mr. Croteau said that the updated Species List was to have been presented by Mr. Dupere.

5. New Business

Arbor Day Event – Langdon Park with Micum Davis of Cornerstone Tree Care

Mr. Davis stated that the upper part of Langdon Park needed work because lots of trees required pruning. He said he did an assessment site walk and noticed a few trees with root problems, and that the lower end of the park had a stand of hemlocks in rough shape with substantial root compaction. He said it could be treated with wood chips and compost. Other landscape companies that he said would attend Arbor Day were Cornerstone Tree, Northeast Shade Tree, Piscataqua Landscaping, The Organic Arborist, Seacoast Tree Care, and New England Tree Service.

He also noted that Maple Haven Park needed some attention as well.

Mr. Rice told Mr. Davis that he appreciated his effort and the efforts of the others and that it was a nice thing to give back to the community. He said Mr. Hallowell and his staff would also participate.

Mr. Rice moved that the Committee accept Cornerstone Tree Care's offer. Ms. Stevens seconded.

Acting Chair Adams reminded the Committee that they had previously voted to remove some trees in that part of the park and suggested that there be some coordination with Mr. Davis so that those trees wouldn't be pruned. He also felt that the event should receive publicity. Mr. Rice said that he would work with his public coordination person to ensure that there would be publicity.

Mr. Davis said his company was not opposed to tree planting but felt that some of the other items would take time. Mr. Hallowell offered to bring compost and wood chips, and he also said it could be turned into a learning demonstration event for his crew.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Eversource Planting Plan

Mr. Desfosses passed out a packet addressing the Mill Pond Substation and Plant Schedule information. He said that the City found the initial planting plan unsatisfactory and that the City Manager had asked Eversource to address it. He said Landworks was hired to meet with City Staff.

Mr. Desfosses reviewed the packet, noting that the final proposed plan was a hybrid of the original plan, the constraints, and what the City wanted. He asked that the Committee review it and offer suggestions to make it the best plan to present to PSNH. He also noted that two driveways leading into the substation caused a big hole in the landscaping and suggested that plants like high-bush blueberries be planted so that they could be driven over in a crisis.

Ms. Stevens suggested that the Committee do a site walk. They decided on Tuesday, April 19, at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Desfosses said he would apprise Eversource of the site walk in case they wanted to attend.

Remove stakes after one year

Acting Chair Adams said that he had seen some stakes removed a few days before. Mr. Hallowell said he thought that most of the stakes throughout the City had been removed and that he would try to reduce staking in the future.

Planting request: Magnant (Pinehurst Road)

Mr. Croteau said the tree was one that had been added to their 2016 list and that he didn't know the species but would ask the owner.

6. Other Business

Acting Chair Adams said he had walked through Pleasant Street Cemetery and noted a lot of samplings growing through the chain-link fence on the Livermore Street side.

Mr. Rice announced that Mr. Hallowell had been hired as the full-time City Arborist. He said he would support the Committee and would attend some meetings.

Mr. Souto asked whether there was a list of stumps that needed grinding. Mr. Croteau said he had a list and that the grinding was cyclical.

Ms. Stevens asked about the Haven School Playground. Mr. Rice said the bid was awarded to a Massachusetts firm and that a new water line would be installed the following month. Mr. Croteau said that construction would begin in a few weeks.

7. Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 11, 2016

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary