

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

MINUTES

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

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Peter Rice, Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; 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: Peter Rice, Department of Public Works

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

1. Minutes of the June 8, 2016 Meeting

Vice-Chair Adams abstained from the vote. The motion to approve the June 8, 2016 meeting minutes was approved.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

146 Thaxter Road

Mr. Hallowell said the silver maple had decay and should be removed. Ms. Stevens asked whether the resident had requested removal, and Mr. Hallowell agreed.

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

303 Thaxter Road

The issue was addressed at the previous meeting.

139 Clinton Street

Mr. Hallowell said the tree had some crown dieback and signs of decay and felt it should be removed. Ms. Stevens said the owner was willing to pay for and plant a replacement tree on his property.

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

151 Clinton Street

Mr. Hallowell said the Norway was losing limbs every year. The owner Jim Schrager was present and said he was in favor of removing the tree because he felt it was unsafe. He indicated that he may want to have it replaced.

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.*

86 Sims Avenue

Mr. Hallowell said there were two separate clumps of multi-stemmed red maples that the owner wanted removed. Vice-Chair Adams asked what was wrong with the tree closest to the road. Mr. Hallowell said it was a multiple stem tree with signs of decay, and that it might be replaced with another shade tree. He said he didn't think the tree was in terrible health. Chairman Loughlin asked whether removing any of the stems made sense but was told that the tree would not recover.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved that the tree be pruned and monitored. Mr. Souto seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

Mr. Hallowell said he would advise the homeowner.

Foch Avenue

Mr. Hallowell stated that the five trees were in the utility lines but noted that there were several other trees in the area.

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

Peirce Island – Wastewater Plant Construction Site

City Engineer Terry Desmarais was present and stated that a major upgrade project would impact the trees. He introduced the project team, including the project manager Eric Meserve. Mr. Meserve said there were several additional trees near the parking lot to be posted for removal.

Ms. Stevens suggested a site walk. Mr. Hallowell said most of the trees seemed insignificant, except for a cluster of oaks that would have to be removed. Vice-Chair Adams asked whether two memorial trees would be affected, and Mr. Meserve said they would not and would be protected by fencing.

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

3. 1483 Islington Street Tree Removal Request (continued from June meeting)

The Committee discussed the height ranges of the poles and the surrounding trees. Mr. Souto said he thought the tree should be removed.

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

4. 77 State Street Planting

Colin Dinsmore stated that two trees were previously removed and asked what the Commission would like to see in their place.

Mr. Hallowell said he would have to visit the site. Chairman Loughlin asked whether the site was large enough for an elm tree, and they further discussed it. Mr. Hallowell said he wanted to ensure that the trees were planted to specification.

Chairman Loughlin suggested that the item be continued to the next meeting because the trees wouldn't be planted until fall. He said the Commission would look at the issue and recommend a species.

Mr. Dinsmore asked whether the City's standards for planting were written so that they could be incorporated into future plans, and Mr. Hallowell said he would send Mr. Dinsmore a specification. Chairman Loughlin suggested that the standards be incorporated at future site reviews.

Chairman Loughlin decided that the petition would be continued until the August meeting and asked the Committee members to review it and make a recommendation.

5. Update on City Tree Planting Program

Mr. Hallowell stated that they were making great progress on their specifications and felt that it would have a big impact on the health of the trees and their longevity. He noted that communication was needed between the City and the residents. He said that some people were upset if a tree was planted in front of their property, and he thought the City should come up with a plan on how to communicate better with the residents and build more trust with them. He passed around a sheet of his suggestions and recommended a policy that once the Committee chose the planting sites by August 1, a date he recommended, letters would be sent to the owners, who would have a grace period of 60 days to respond.

Chairman Loughlin and Vice-Chair Adams said it was a great idea.

Mr. Hallowell further discussed how hard the Committee should press a resident because it was a community issue, even though the plantings were on City property. Vice-Chair Adams said he didn't think the Committee could make the August 1 deadline and

suggested a September 1 deadline. Chairman Loughlin said the issue could be put on the website to solicit people to submit their requests and then the Committee could discuss it.

Chairman Loughlin asked about the 2016 planting. Mr. Croteau said they were finished planting but that logistics was a problem with the new process. They put the bid out but the trees weren't available when they tried to purchase them. He suggested bidding in February in the future. He also noted that the bid process contractor was excellent.

6. Sagamore Grove Water Line Project

Colin Dinsmore made a presentation, stating that it was a joint project between a private developer and the City. He showed the location of the City water line and noted that the developer would upsize the line but that the trees along the route might be in jeopardy. Mr. Dinsmore pointed out the existing sewer concrete chambers that were still in the road, noting that they wouldn't leave a lot of room for the water line. He said they would try to avoid the trees but that the applicant would replace them if they had to be removed.

Mr. Hallowell said the trees were probably planted wrong and should be removed. Chairman Loughlin said he would prefer to leave the trees alone if they didn't have to be removed. He suggested stipulating that the trees be preserved if possible, and if not, that new trees be planted.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Walker moved that the trees be retained if the water line could be kept out of the planting area; if not, the trees would be removed and the owner would replace the trees in kind. Ms. Stevens seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

However, Vice-Chair Adams said he was opposed to the motion because he was in favor of planting trees properly. They further discussed it. Mr. Hallowell said the trees were probably planted too deeply and had root issues. He suggested removing them and planting new trees, and he noted that the trees had only been there for three years.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a modified motion. *Mr. Souto moved that the trees be removed and new ones planted according to specifications when the work was finished. Vice-Chair Adams seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

7. Hunking Street Plantings Request

Chairman Loughlin said he had a call from Peter Morin of 49 Pickering Street saying that he and some neighbors were concerned that the trees would block their water view when they got larger. The Committee further discussed the issue, noting that some neighbors loved the trees. Mr. Hallowell said the bottom limbs could be pruned without affecting the tree and the water views would be retained.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved that Mr. Morin be notified that the community was not in favor of removing the trees but that the trees would be pruned*

from the bottom once they got taller so that the water views would be maintained. Mr. Hallowell seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

8. Tree Removal at 30 Elwyn Road

Mr. Hallowell said the red maple wasn't a nice tree. Mr. Croteau said the resident was concerned that it would fall over in a windstorm.

Mr. Croteau said he would repost the tree for future consideration.

9. Tree Planting for 2017

The issue was discussed earlier in the meeting.

10. Old Business

Mr. Dupere said a few trees were planted in Langdon Park a few weeks before and that Vice-Chair Adams donated a tree.

Mr. Croteau introduced Dan Lewis, a City intern, and said he had a proposal for tree benches in the City. Mr. Lewis presented his proposal for four tree bench locations around Market Square.

Ms. Stevens asked what the benches were made out of, and Mr. Lewis said they were steel. Mr. Croteau said they were looking for funding from private partnerships. Mr. Dupere asked who would install the benches. Mr. Croteau said City staff would. Mr. Hallowell asked whether the benches would land outside of the planting beds, and Mr. Lewis said they would be put directly within the four corners.

11. New Business

Mr. Souto said he was concerned about a tree on the corner of Rockland Street and Miller Avenue because the top was dead, and another tree at 260 Aldrich Road that looked like it was dying. Mr. Hallowell said he would look into it.

Ms. Walker said a lilac tree on Burkitt Street between Thornton and Clinton Streets looked like it could be pruned. Mr. Croteau said he would look into it.

Chairman Loughlin stated for the record that Mr. Croteau came up with the idea of tree benches based on the recommendation from City Councilor Nancy Pearson.

Marilyn Wallingford said she was a member of the Portsmouth Garden Club and was working on the entrance to City Hall. She said she wanted to thank the City crew and thought they were wonderful.

City resident Stuart Wisong of South Mill Street passed out photos of a tree in the island at the junction of New Castle Avenue and South Street that he recommended be removed

and not replaced because he believed that the tree had a fungus that could affect other trees. Chairman Loughlin said the tree would have to be posted for a public hearing and could be heard at the August meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary