

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, August 9, 2017
Portsmouth City Hall**

Members Present: Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; A.J. Dupere, Leslie Stevens Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; Corin Hallowell, City Arborist; Dennis Souto, Joan Walker, and Dan Umbro

Members Excused: Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the July 12, 2017 Meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote to approve the July 12, 2017 minutes.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

1. Bridge Street – Parking Garage Project

Project Manager Dave Allen was present to speak to the request. He presented the site plan and distributed copies of it to the committee. He pointed out the location of the trees requested to be removed and noted that the road connecting into Rock Street would have a gate.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether some of the trees were outside of the road construction. Mr. Allen said those trees would be removed as part of the grading. He said the Ferguson Building would also eventually be removed and a sidewalk constructed.

2. Rock Street Park – Parking Garage Project

Project Manager Dave Allen was present to speak to the request. He pointed out the trees that were requested to be removed and said the City had an agreement with the Heinemann Company that the City-constructed parking lot could be used by them during normal working hours in exchange for allowing neighborhood residents to park there. He said they were providing additional temporary parking for Heinemann during construction, and to do so would require removing the arborvitae. He noted that the City would design an upgrade to Rock Street Park during construction and that the temporary parking would eventually go away. Mr. Rice said the park would end up acting more as a gateway to the City and have a formalized entrance. Mr. Allen said the parcel on the east side of the proposed garage would also become a park.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend the removal of the tree, and Mr. Souto seconded.*

Ms. Stevens asked whether any planting would occur later. Mr. Allen said they had limited green space and only room enough for ground cover plantings, due to the transformer and other utilities. He noted that Deer Street Associates were planning to add street trees in the future.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Indoor Pool

Chairman Loughlin said the DPW requested the tree's removal. Mr. Hallowell said the tree was half dead and leaned over the parking lot, so he recommended its removal as soon as possible.

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

4. Corner of Ceres & Bow

Mr. Hallowell said the crab apple tree was dead, and the two next to it were also on their way out. He said they would replace the tree in the spring. Mr. Rice suggested replacing all three of them and asked that the other two trees be placed on the following month's agenda.

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

5. Corner of South and Wibird Streets

The resident Rob Philbrick was present and said the tree was in front of his home. Mr. Hallowell said the pin oak was in serious decline, probably from root damage due to the gas line project. He recommended that it be removed and replaced. Mr. Philbrick said he saw the gas company cut some of the tree's major roots.

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

6. Market Street Extension (near off-ramp for I-95) – Gateway Project

Mr. Hallowell noted that the trees requested to be removed were one black cherry, three white pines, one gray birch, one poplar, and one red maple. He said there was a ledge on the right that was obstructed by the trees and that the City wanted to make it more visible.

Mr. Rice explained that the intent was to create a bookend ledge definition in the front, which the plantings were intended to accent. He said he hadn't looked at some of the trees and wasn't sure whether any of them were worth incorporating into the gateway. Mr. Hallowell said he didn't think they were. He said the gray birch was tiny, the cherry was damaged, the poplar leaned, and the white pines had needle caps. He also noted that the red maple was healthy but wouldn't last long term.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved that the City proceed with the tree removals, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

3. Update on North Church Linden Tree Removal Request (continued from July meeting)

Mr. Hallowell said the church personnel claimed that the tree's roots were getting into the foundation. He recommended trying Flexible Porous Pavement, a product used in Portland, ME that he had seen and that he said looked great. He said that Portland had used it in place of mulch for two years and that it created a nice interface between the brick walkway and the tree roots as well as eliminated bulging granite. He said the product could be worked around the tree to create a pervious surface and that it was used in national parks and major cities throughout the country.

Chairman Loughlin verified that the church personnel had requested the tree's removal because the roots went into the cellar. He said the committee was concerned about setting a precedent about removing trees that went into pipe. He asked why the roots would go into a basement. Mr. Hallowell said the tree tried to find moisture to grow. It was further discussed. Mr. Rice asked Mr. Hallowell whether he had inspected the basement, and Mr. Hallowell said he didn't. Mr. Rice said he wished to see whether it was a real or perceived challenge.

Ms. Walker said the committee could run into the same problem with homeowners. She noted that there were several stone foundations in Portsmouth. She said she saw the problem the same as the sewer pipe issue and that it could set a precedent, resulting in the loss of a lot of trees.

Mr. Rice said it was worthwhile for the committee to take a look at it. He described the product and said it had good applications, especially for trees with grates, and could perhaps be an interim solution until sidewalks were filled, and so on. He said he would support investing some money and approaching it as a pilot effort. He noted that all of Market Square had to be rebuilt in the future because it was in rough shape. Mr. Hallowell said the product would also get rid of the trip hazard from the roots. He said it was the only way he could think of to save the tree.

Chairman Loughlin suggested trying the product on the linden tree and also looking into whether the City could go into the church basement to see what the interior problems were. Mr. Rice said it might be better to take initial efforts and let the church come back to the committee if they continued to have issues. He noted that it was more of an operational item and that they weren't removing the tree.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved that the tree not be removed, that the Flexible Porous Pavement product be tried, and that the tree continue to be monitored. Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

4. Update on Tree Care Trust Fund:

Chairman Loughlin noted that City Attorney Robert Sullivan was present at the last meeting and that he had done a third revision. Mr. Rice said it would go to the City Council.

Action Item: Chairman Loughlin said he would send a letter to the City Manager noting that the committee received approval from Attorney Sullivan and that the committee supported the fund.

5. Update on Tree Grant Program:

Chairman Loughlin noted that Attorney Sullivan didn't see any problems with the program, so he was willing to support it. Mr. Rice asked whether the allocated funds were a specific amount that was set

aside or one or two trees a year, i.e., was it a defined annual amount set aside or as resources allowed. He said the City could get overwhelmed with requests. Mr. Dupere suggested denoting it as 'resources allowed' until the City got overloaded because he thought if a cap were put on it, there might be a situation where the City was trying to get a tree somewhere and couldn't do it.

Mr. Souto asked what the difference was between the trust fund and the grant program. Mr. Dupere said the trust fund allowed Mr. Hallowell to receive cash from donors, and the grant program was when trees were planted on private property for the benefit of the city.

Mr. Rice said they would work with the Legal Department to develop the language and come up with the appropriate agreement. He thought a license might be the way to go and that it wouldn't need to be recorded because it would be temporary. Mr. Croteau said they could still memorialize it in their tree data, however. Mr. Rice agreed, noting that if the owner wanted the tree removed in two years, it would be the owner's responsibility.

6. Update on Landscape Plan for 46-64 Maplewood Avenue:

Chairman Loughlin said the plan was reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and had changes, so it would probably come back to the committee in September.

7. Old Business:

There was no old business.

8. New Business:

Mr. Dupere noted that there was a dead elm tree on Greenleaf Street. Mr. Hallowell said it was on his list to be removed. Mr. Dupere also noted that there was a dead elm at Crossroads. Mr. Croteau said it was a Department of Transportation (DOT) issue and that they would handle it.

Mr. Hallowell said that a contractor donated his services to fertilize the two sugar maples at Woodman Park.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary