

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, December 13, 2017
Portsmouth City Hall**

Members Present: Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Leslie Stevens; A. J. Dupere; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Corin Hallowell, City Arborist; Joan Walker; and Dan Umbro

Members Excused: Dennis Souto; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the November 8, 2017 Meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the November 8, 2017 minutes.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

2 Blue Heron Drive – Willow requested by resident

The resident Paula Skelley was present to speak to the request. She said the tree looked like it was rotting, that large branches had fallen off, and the roots were going into the sump pump.

Mr. Hallowell said it was a large, healthy tree and suggested pruning it so that the limbs didn't fall onto the property. Ms. Skelley said she was concerned that branches would fall on her house. Mr. Hallowell said that pruning would reduce the risk of property damage. Mr. Rice noted that willows shed a lot of branches in general but also absorb a lot of water and help prevent high groundwater. He said he concurred with Mr. Hallowell that heavy pruning would be sufficient. The Committee further discussed root-inhibiting methods. Mr. Hallowell said there was the potential of water flooding the basement if the tree were removed. He said the tree had a certain amount of decay, which was common in a willow, but felt that it was structurally sound.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to have the tree pruned, and if further concerns were found, to bring the issue back to the Committee. Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue – Arborvitae in lower City Hall parking lot next to 299 South

Mr. Hallowell said one stem of the tree was pushing against a fence and suggested removing the stem.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to remove only the stem of the tree.*

423 Greenside Drive – White pine, resident request

Mr. Hallowell said that the pine tree was one of a row of pines, one of which fell recently and caused a lot of damage to the resident's shed and yard. He also noted that the road-widening project damaged the tree a few years before. He suggested that it be removed to give the resident peace of mind.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to recommend the tree's removal, and Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

437 Lafayette Road – Norway maple, DPW request

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was in the path of a traffic signal upgrade.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to recommend the tree's removal, and Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

570 Lincoln Avenue – DPW, Norway maple

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was full of decay and recommended removal and planting something else in its place.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to recommend removal of the tree.*

636 Lincoln Avenue – Norway maple, DPW

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to recommend removal of the tree.*

244 South Street – Crab apple, resident

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was about 60% dead and was an eyesore.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend the tree's removal, and Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

3. Islington Street Improvements

Mr. Rice said he met with Dr. Chase, who owned property at the end of Spinney Road. She requested that a shrub, like a lilac bush, be added instead of a tree so that it would not obscure her dental practice sign. He noted that it was her property. It was briefly discussed and concluded that her request was reasonable.

Mr. Hallowell told the Committee what the tree species were for the other locations. Mr. Rice said they were currently doing an internal review and intended to plant in January.

4. Spring 2018 Planting: Discuss Species, Locations & Timing of Bid Solicitation

Mr. Hallowell stated that he had 30 locations for 45-50 trees and said the City could send letters to those addresses. He noted that there were also a few tree grants, which brought the list close to 50 trees. He said he would have a completed species list at the January 10 meeting.

Mr. Dupere said the bids generally went out in March. The Committee discussed a cut-off date for tree planting. Mr. Hallowell said they accomplished tree planting by early May in 2016.

5. Protection of Street Trees During Construction –

Mr. Hallowell referenced the RSA Standard for tree protection during construction and said that the Tufts University Arborist offered to share with the Committee a set of construction standards that he wrote. Mr. Hallowell said he should have a completed document, including graphics, by the January 10 meeting. Mr. Rice said they could be placed into the site review requirements as well.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

Vice-Chair Adams noted that the spruce in Market Square by the Athenaeum was probably the best Christmas tree ever at that site. He asked whether a tree farm could be considered for future use to ensure an adequate supply of Market Square Christmas trees into the distant future. Chairman Loughlin said it would be labor intensive and difficult to maintain. Mr. Hallowell said he thought the City could easily have a tree farm because it wasn't that difficult to grow Christmas trees and a display tree of the type in question would not need regular shaping, as is the case with commercially-grown trees for residential use. Vice-Chair Adams asked whether there was a suitable place to do it. Mr. Rice said the City had two pieces of property available and that he would look into it. Mr. Hallowell said they could do a variety of trees, including spruce, red spruce, and balsam fir and could also get a good rate on planting stock. Mr. Dupere noted that the State Nursery also had a stock of large evergreens.

8. Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2018

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary