

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, January 10, 2018
Portsmouth City Hall**

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

Members Excused: Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the December 13, 2017 Meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the December 13, 2017 minutes.

2. Tree Removal Requests

There were no tree removal requests.

3. Landscape Plan for 46-64 Maplewood Avenue – Robbi Woodburn

Robbi Woodburn was present to review the 46-64 Maplewood Avenue Landscape Plan and distributed copies to the Committee. She said she had had several meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and would soon meet with the Planning Board.

Ms. Woodburn reviewed the plan. She pointed out that they would replace some street trees that were in the City right-of-way with seven Worplesdon American sweet gums. She said that honey locusts would be used for the courtyard and that the area near the VFW was not part of the package any longer. She noted that silva cells and tree grates and guards would also be used.

Mr. Rice said they had discussed not adding the sweet gums on the corner due to visibility and line-of-sight issues because it was a busy intersection and the trees would be pushed out to the edge. He said the trees in the other corridor would break up a by-way that he felt should have a visual opening. It was discussed. Mr. Rice said that the two sweet gums at the corner concerned him because they would be susceptible to plow damage. He said he preferred a wide sidewalk and putting some distance between the edge of the road and the tree grates. Ms. Woodburn said her client would be responsible for snow maintenance.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether a traffic engineer had looked into the line-of-sight issue. Mr. Rice said he would speak with Eric Eby, and Ms. Woodburn said she would talk to the project manager John Chagnon. Chairman Loughlin said he strongly felt that the two trees be installed if they could be done so as to be out of the line of sight. It was further discussed. Mr. Hallowell pointed out that the intersection was controlled by a traffic light, which made a difference. Mr. Rice said he was hesitant

because there were visibility concerns at that intersection due to the angle of the turn and because it was an offset intersection. Ms. Woodburn suggested shifting the trees, pointing out on the diagram how it could be done. Mr. Rice said that the issue would be addressed at the TAC meeting. Mr. Souto asked whether the trees could be pulled farther from the roadway, but Ms. Woodburn said they could not because of the utilities. Mr. Rice said the distance should be maximized from obstruction to obstruction and that there should be a minimum of eight feet.

Chairman Loughlin said he felt that more was better and that he advocated for the maximum planning. He said that Mr. Rice's approach was from the safety point of view, and he thought that if the two were balanced, they would end up with two additional trees, which he was in favor of. It was further discussed. Mr. Souto said that he would be okay with five sweet gums instead of seven if it meant a safer corner. Mr. Hollowell said the traffic signal would help because it would aid people getting in and out. Mr. Rice pointed out that there was also a maintenance component that would affect his budget and if a tree were damaged by snow removal and so on, the City would have to replace it. It was concluded that downtown trees were important but that the budget impact had to be acknowledged. Chairman Loughlin said he could request more money for maintenance on behalf of the Committee. Ms. Woodburn said she would take her cues from the January 30 TAC meeting.

There was no motion. It was noted that the Committee recommended that the landscape plan go to TAC and that TAC make a decision on it.

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

Mr. Hollowell distributed a list of the 2018 City tree plantings that included the species, location, and Latin name of each tree. He noted that a few sites were still in progress and that he would probably end up with 41 or 42 trees. He discussed the Greenland Avenue site and said there would possibly be a mix of 10 evergreens, including a few deciduous trees, planted all at once to fill the space.

Ms. Stevens asked Mr. Hollowell if he was able to actually get all the trees listed. Mr. Hollowell said that as soon as it was put out to bid, he would give the contracted company the list to see whether they could find the trees. He noted that some trees might be difficult to find but said he had a backup plan.

Mr. Hollowell said he was prepared to send out the letters to the homeowners if the Committee was okay with it. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Hollowell pointed out that the South Street planting would become a tree grant request because it was on private property. He said the area near the indoor pool was a barren spot and that he might plant a little more variety in that section instead of pin oaks or deciduous trees.

Vice-Chair Adams asked whether Mr. Hollowell had considered the site and its suitability for a given species. Mr. Hollowell said he did soil tests the year before and found that the pH levels were consistent. He said there were only a few sites that he wanted to test in the spring to make sure. He said the tree species were chosen based on the condition of the soil that the trees would be growing in.

5. Protection of Street Trees During Construction

Mr. Hollowell distributed copies of the Tree Protection Plan to the Committee. He said a colleague who was an arborist for Tufts University wanted the Committee's planting requirements. Mr.

Hallowell said he traded the City's planting requirements for the Tufts tree protection plan, which included ANSI standards and Best Management Practices (BMP) standards. He said those were standards that should be included because they would help contractors become familiar with the City's rules and the City would become known for protecting its assets.

Chairman Loughlin said the City should have those standards when a bid went out for construction and for building permits. He asked whether it was possible to do a graphic, and Mr. Hallowell said it was. It was further discussed. Mr. Rice said it would be good for City and site review projects, would be a best management policy, would do outreach to the contractor, and would educate the Planning Board and TAC. Chairman Loughlin said it could be noted on a site plan, and he thought the Planning board might have to draft some rules.

Mr. Dupere asked who would own the tree, the homeowner or the City. Mr. Rice said it would depend on the boundary surveys and property lines. He said they usually referred to GIS information. Chairman Loughlin said that it was presumed that the City owned all the trees, in terms of protection. Mr. Rice agreed but said that if a big tree on someone's property had to be removed at a cost of a few thousand dollars, it might be a different story.

Chairman Loughlin asked how the plan would be implemented. Mr. Rice said the Committee would finalize the plan, after which he would meet with the Planning Department to see whether there was existing language that referenced the requirements. He said he would then educate the Inspection Department. Chairman Loughlin asked whether it should be the City Arborist instead of the Committee because of the changes made in the field. Mr. Hallowell said it was stated that the plans should be reviewed by the Committee and signed off before the award. Mr. Rice said it could be TAC's jurisdiction, and it was further discussed.

Mr. Rice suggested that the Committee review the plan and return it with comments. He said it had to be vetted through the Legal and Planning departments to see how it worked in terms of the overall structure, but he thought it was a great first cut.

Action Item: The Committee members will review the plan and forward their comments to Mr. Hallowell before the February meeting.

6. Old Business

Mr. Hallowell asked about the tree trust fund that was previously discussed, where the public could donate money towards. Mr. Rice said he would speak with the City Manager and City Attorney.

Action Item: Mr. Rice will address the tree trust fund with City Manager Bohenko and Attorney Sullivan.

7. New Business

Vice-Chair Adams noted that a resident at the corner of Mt. Vernon and South Streets complained about the snow being piled against her rental property and risked ruining the pear tree. He asked whether there was another way to dispose of the snow pile. Mr. Rice said his department had certain demands with snow operation and didn't have a lot of space in that area in which to place snow, but he

said he would consider it. Vice-Chair Adams said the tree would be buried if there were another big storm.

Mr. Rice asked whether soil could be amended with gypsum. Mr. Dupere said he didn't know but felt that a flush of water in March or April was better than anything else because salt dissolved. He said he would look into the gypsum issue but noted that gypsum became gummy and slimy and wasn't very good for sidewalks.

Mr. Souto commended the Public Works Department in doing a great job dealing with the recent storm.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 14, 2018

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary