

**Trees and Public Greenery Committee  
City of Portsmouth**

**MINUTES**

**8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, July 10, 2019  
Portsmouth City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Manager’s Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; A. J. Dupere, Dennis Souto, Joan Walker, Dan Umbro, and Michael Griffin

**Members Excused:** Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; City Arborist Corin Hallowell

**Also Present:** Chuck Baxter, Department of Public Works Arborist

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Vice-Chairman Richard Adams assumed Chairman Loughlin’s seat in his absence and called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**1. Acceptance of Minutes of the June 12, 2019 Meeting**

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the June 12, 2019 meeting minutes.

**2. Tree Removal Requests**

**1. 134 Richards Avenue**

Mr. Baxter said the Norway maple was in severe decline and that it should be removed.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the tree, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

**2. 135 Richards Avenue**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was another Norway maple in similar decline.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Griffin moved to recommend removal of the tree, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

**3. 430 Richards Avenue**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was diseased and would break in half soon. He said the owner requested a replacement tree.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the tree, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

### **3. Update on spring plantings: species and sites**

Mr. Baxter said the spring planting was successful so far except for a few sites, including a few trees at the dog park that died. He said two other trees didn't make it due to poor nursery stock, but that they were warrantied. He said he would check into whether the other trees could be warrantied as well. Upon a request by Mr. Adams, he agreed to disseminate the latest summary of species and sites related to the spring planting.

### **4. Altus Engineering regarding 200 Chase Drive**

Acting-Chair Adams told the Committee that Altus Engineering requested that the discussion be postponed to the August meeting. Cory Belden of Altus Engineering was present and said it would be more beneficial to have the meeting when the landscape architect could present the landscaping plan. He noted that the proposed location was at the low end of the parking lot near the pine trees and that there was an opportunity to do replacements and enhancements in that area because the City owned a large portion of the property on the corner across from Michael Soucy Drive. He said a third of the lot would be removed for the new building and that parking would be added. He noted that the building had to be within 10-30 feet of the property lines facing the site.

City resident Kyle Angelier was present and said she submitted a letter addressing the issue of removing the trees. She said the developer wanted to remove them to enhance their views, which would cause her views and those of her neighbors to be blocked by the new building. She also noted that the trees should be protected in that area.

Mr. Rice asked about the application's status. Mr. Belden said they had to go before the Planning Board for design review and then meet with the Technical Advisory Committee.

Mr. Umbro asked how far the development went out. Mr. Belden showed the location of the property line and said the building's location was due to zoning requirements, which required that the building be set close to the property line. He said the 50-ft pine trees were on the property line and would be right in front of the building.

Acting-Chair Adams said the Committee didn't address view issues. Mr. Rice agreed, noting that the Committee in the past had ruled against moving trees solely based on viewscapes. He asked that Mr. Belden bring large diagrams to the next meeting showing where the existing trees were versus the property line.

### **5. Trees at the end of Dearborn Street**

Susan Regan of 30 Dearborn Street was present and stated that trees should not have been planted at the end of Dearborn Street because it was City property. She distributed photos to the Committee showing telephone poles and said it was a right-of-way and could not

be blocked. She said a neighbor many years ago put a fence on City property and planted trees along it, and that the needles from the trees affected wildlife and the fence prevented geese and swans from going into their natural habitat. She also showed photos of tar and rocks and said the owner had been using it as a dump. Acting-Chair Adams said some of the issues were not relevant to the Committee. Mr. Rice agreed. He said the City's environmental planer said pruning the trees would be appropriate but removing them would disturb the shoreline. Mr. Rice said his staff would look into the trash and debris issue. Ms. Regan also noted that the street went down to the water.

Acting-Chair Adams said it was a legal matter. Mr. Rice agreed and also noted that there were other similar water streets that had trees growing in them. He said he would defer the issue to the Legal Department and that there was no justification to remove the trees at that time. He said the trees would be evaluated and pruned.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to refer the matter to the Legal Department, and Mr. Griffin seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

## **6. Old Business**

Mr. Rice said he would check with Mr. Hallowell regarding the trees in Market Square.

## **7. New Business**

Mr. Baxter said compost tea was being applied to City trees as a soil amendment. He explained the process and said it would result in healthier soil. Mr. Rice said it was part of the City's strategy to move toward organic management practices, and he thought Mr. Baxter and Mr. Hallowell were doing a great job and going beyond the traditional process.

Mr. Rice said a silver maple at 45 Elwyn Avenue fell over, and he recommended that the similar maple near it be removed. Mr. Baxter explained that the tree fell down during the windstorm due to a large column of decay in its main stem. He said the other tree was very large and that it should be discussed at the August meeting.

The Committee said goodbye to Committee member Joan Walker and wished her well.

## **8. Next meeting: Wednesday, August 14, 2019.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Committee Recording Secretary