

**Minutes of the
City of Portsmouth's
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
June 10, 2026**

Present: Chair Patricia Bagley; Vice-Chair Michael Griffin; Director of Public Works Peter Rice; City Tree Supervisor/Arborist Maxwell Wiater; Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley-Adams; Dennis Souto, A. J. Dupere, Deborah Chag, Scott McDermott, and Ian Hanley.

Members Excused: None.

Chair Bagley called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Acceptance of the May 13 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were **approved** unanimously as submitted.

2. Tree Removal Requests

- **67 Ridges Ct: 1 Norway maple, good condition, removal requested by Eversource, removal recommended by the City.** A new home construction has prompted an upgrade to Eversource infrastructure.

Chair Bagley said emails were received from three residents of Ridges Ct who opposed the tree's removal. Lewis Tree Service representative Anthony Strout said his company would be performing the removal. He said he told Eversource that the property owner Mr. Foy wanted the tree pruned instead of removed, and that Mr. Foy was also concerned about the new pole's location. Mr. Strout said Eversource wanted to replace the pole in the same location, which would cause so much of the tree to be removed that it would die anyway. Mr. Wiater asked if any alternative layouts to the infrastructure were discussed. Mr. Strout said they discussed putting a pole to the left and running a secondary low voltage line to the existing pole. Ms. Chag ask if the underground utility complicated the situation. Mr. Dupere said even if the wires were shortened, a third of the tree would be lost. Ms. Chag said she thought another transformer would be placed on top of the new pole. Mr. Dupere agreed but said it could only serve so many houses. Mr. Rice explained that there were a dozen residences up and down the street but only the last 3 or 4 houses were being served by that section.

Kirsten Barton of 49 Ridges Ct (via Zoom) said she lived two houses up the street and the transformer was next to her driveway. She asked if all the wires could be placed underground. Mr. Rice said it was but that Eversource nor the City would not pay for it. He said if private entities were interested, however, Eversource would work with them. Ms. Barton suggested that the involved neighbors meet with Eversource and the

Committee at the July meeting to discuss the costs. Mr. Dupere suggested that they meet on site late in the afternoon instead. Mr. Wiater said he had the contact information for Eversource and the three residents who were opposed to cutting down the tree and that he could coordinate something. It was further discussed.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to have City Staff review and report back to the Committee once the meeting has been facilitated so that the Committee can make an informed decision. Assistant Mayor Kelley-Adams seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 9-1, with Mr. Souto voting in opposition.*

Note: 36 Suzanne Drive was addressed next because a resident was present to speak to it.

- **330-A Jones Ave: 1 white pine, poor condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City.** This pine located on right of way has a history of leader failure. There are many woodpecker holes along the trunk. A large root appears to have girdled a portion of the trunk.

Mr. Wiater said the City owned the tree and that it was near a high-use trail. He said the tree had a history of leader failure and woodpecker damage, and a large root also shut down a significant portion of the tree.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Assistant Mayor Kelley-Adams moved to recommend removal of the tree. Mr. Rice seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **36 Suzanne Dr: 1 sugar maple, poor condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City.** A crack has formed between two leaders, there are decaying cavities, and large woodpecker holes.

Julia O'Leary of 17 Suzanne Dr (via Zoom) said the power line to her house was next to the tree and that the tree would take her power down if removed. Mr. Wiater said there was no reason to keep the tree, given all its defects.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to recommend removal of the tree., seconded by Vice-Chair Griffin. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **1877 Islington St: 2 green ash, poor condition, removal requested and recommended by the City.** The central leaders have likely been girdled by EAB.

Mr. Wiater said he spoke to the homeowner, who wanted a lot of trees replanted in that area. Mr. Dupere explained that green ash trees were smaller trees but still got EAB and that they never came back no matter what was done. Mr. Wiater said the City could plant quite a few trees next year. It was further discussed.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **524 Union St: 1 cherry, poor condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City.** The tree is covered in black knot fungus, and the canopy is very spotty with stress shoots. Many significant cracks are present along the trunk.

Mr. Wiater said another tree next to the cherry that had a severe case of black knot was removed and that the resident was excited to get another tree after that removal.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley-Adams. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **Peirce Island (near outdoor pool): 1 Norway maple, poor condition, removal requested and recommended by the City.** The central leader of this tree failed during a recent storm. The remaining canopy shows signs of continued decline.

Mr. Wiater said the tree's central leader failed and that it would be a waste of time to prune the tree at this point.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Dupere. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **313 Leslie Dr: 1 Norway maple, fair condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City.** A significant leader failed in a recent storm and resulted in 50% canopy loss. It will be necessary to prune the tree, which will result in more canopy loss, and Eversource will continue to prune for clearance.

Mr. Wiater said half of the tree failed due to the windstorm on May 30 and that it lost 50 percent of its canopy. He said the tree's remaining canopy now hung very heavily over the road. He said there would eventually be a loss of greater than 60 percent of the tree's canopy, which would stress the tree, so he recommended removing it and seeing if the resident wanted to plant ornamentals along the right-of-way strip.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Assistant Mayor Kelley-Adams moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion passed unanimously.*

Removed tree from storm on 5/30/26:

- **97 Meredith Way: 1 Norway maple, poor condition.** A significant leader failed in the storm, and at the leader union into the trunk was compromised with rot.

Mr. Wiater said the tree had already been removed due to damage from the severe May windstorm. He said a significant leader came down and exposed a lot of decay.

3. New Business [Timestamp 34:45]

- **Urban Forestry Intern: Boden Gendron**

- **Projects:** City beech inventory and BLD monitoring, soil sampling and inventory, soil amendments, mulch volcano patrol.
- **Typical duties:** Tree watering, mycorrhizal inoculant/micronutrient application, daily tasks with Urban Forestry crew.

Mr. Wiater said the new intern Boden Gendron would join the Committee at the July meeting. He said Mr. Gendron would be working on the projects and duties listed above. He said the soil sampling and inventory were needed in certain right-of-way corridors like Middle Street and the City's parks to get an idea of what was there and what kinds of trees could be planted. He said it would also create a point layer on their GIS mapping system so that the exact location of where the soil sample was taken would be known and the data could always be accessed. Mulch volcanos were discussed.

Discussion of Current Treatments for BLD (Beech Leaf Disease), e.g., Arbotech [Timestamp 38:45]

- **Cost to treat BLD, especially legacy trees**
- **What approach, if any, can the City take for privately-owned trees**

Chair Bagley said the Langdon House beech tree at the left of the house didn't look good. She said she took photos of it last year and sent them to the arborist who handles historic beech trees, and he confirmed that the tree had beech leaf disease (BLD). She said she wondered what a citizen could do about something like this, and she found out as much as she could about treatments and costs. She said it wasn't known if treating a beech tree would guarantee that it would survive. She asked if the City provided any type of education for the beech trees owned by the City and by residents. She said the Langdon Mansion on Pleasant Street had two beech trees, one of which lost a large branch some years ago but recovered. She said she couldn't imagine that landscape without the beech trees. She said several historic properties in Portsmouth had stately beech trees. She said out-of-towners visited the Langdon Mansion. She asked if the City had any recourse for BLD. Mr. Dupere said he could talk to Kyle VanAmburg, arborist representative for Bartlett Tree Experts, about different chemicals and then report back to the Committee. He also suggested that people contact Dr. Beth Brantly, who was the face of Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories. It was further discussed.

Action Item: Mr. Dupere will get more information from Kyle VanAmburg and report back to the Committee.

- **Catalpa Tree on Spring Street**

Ms. Chag said she was a member of the City's Tree Walk and that she went by the catalpa tree on Spring Street several times and saw that construction workers placed a

granite retainer piece and a 2-ft trough next to the tree. She said the tree was surrounded by stonework. Mr. Rice said the tree was in the City's right-of-way and that the contractor did not have the right to install stonework there and would need a license agreement. It was further discussed.

Action Item: Mr. Rice will talk to the contractor and report back to the Committee.

4. Old Business

- **Tree Planting Wrap-Up:** Discussion on Planting Operations for 2026.

The topic was postponed to the July meeting.

5. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 8, 2026

The meeting **adjourned** at 9:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Trees and Greenery Committee Meeting Minutes Taker