

**Minutes of the
City of Portsmouth's
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
July 8, 2026**

Present: Chair Patricia Bagley; Vice-Chair Michael Griffin; City Tree Supervisor/Arborist Maxwell Wiater; A. J. Dupere, Deborah Chag, and Ian Hanley.

Members Excused: Public Works Director Peter Rice, Dennis Souto, Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley-Adams, and Scott McDermott.

Also Present: Stephanie Seacord, staff.

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

1. Acceptance of the June 10 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were **approved** unanimously as amended, 5-0.

Note: Kyle VanAmberg's last name was changed to Lombard, and the phrase about Ms. Chag being a member of the City's Tree Walk was deleted.

2. Tree Removal Requests

- **67 Ridges Ct, revisiting from 6-10-26:** 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. Residents of Ridges Ct have accepted the tree removal request and are satisfied with the current proposed plan from Eversource.

Vice-Chair Griffin noted that the meeting with the City residents was very informative and that everyone offered suggestions. Resident Stephen Barndollar of 120 Ridges Ct was present and asked if there were options for removing the tree and whether there were options on where the light poles could go. Mr. Wiater said there were three options, two of which were not effective, so the third option was to remove the tree and replace the second pole in the same footprint as the current pole. He said the City would plant small ornamental trees in their right-of-way next spring. He said the new pole would be higher and the City had a legal easement. It was further discussed.

Resident Judy Miller of 77 Hanover St said she appreciated that the two mature trees in front of the Hanover St Garage would be replaced.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Griffin moved to accept the original request for removal of the Norway maple, seconded by Mr. Hanley. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **270 South St:** 1 sugar maple, fair condition, removal requested by resident. Recent storm damage has prompted this request. A central leader failed from the top of the trunk and there is now a large wound exposing decayed wood. There are other cracks and cavities along the trunk. The crown of this tree has been raised several times, resulting in a canopy that will be difficult to effectively perform a retrenchment or end-weight reduction prune.

Mr. Wiater abstained from the vote. Resident Kim Schroeder of 280 South St said the tree provided a lot of cooling shade and a habitat and that she and her wife preferred that it remain. Mr. Wiater said there was a significant leader that was rotten and came out. He said normally a heavy reduction pruning would be done, but for that particular tree it was not the best option because it had already been pruned quite a bit for clearance. It was discussed and decided that it would be better to remove the tree, especially for safety reasons.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Hanley moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Dupere. The motion **passed** by a vote of 3-2, with Vice-Chair Griffin and Ms. Chag voting in opposition.*

Mr. Wiater then suggested getting another assessment and revisit this request in August.

Mr. Hanley, who made the original motion, then moved to reconsider the removal request, which passed unanimously.

There was further discussion about assessment. Mr. Dupere said the New Hampshire State community forest arborist Liz McKinley could do a tree risk assessment qualified (TRAQ) assessment and that the tree request could be revisited at the August meeting.

*Mr. Hanley then moved to **table** the removal request until August to allow for another assessment. Ms. Chag seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **Haven Park:** 1 eastern hemlock, fair condition, removal requested by resident. The tree located near the center walkway has a basal wound that is decayed, and the canopy is thinning throughout.

Mr. Wiater said the tree had foliage loss and decline throughout it, a basal wound with decay, and a lean. He said it could be monitored but thought it would continue to decline.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Ms. Chag moved to **deny** the request to remove the tree and instead continue to **monitor** it. Vice-Chair Griffin seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **Hancock St at Marcy St:** 1 green ash, 1 black locust, 1 red maple, poor conditions, removals requested and recommended by the City. The ash is showing signs of EAB infestation. Over 12" of the 20" DBH black locust is dead including root damage and

decline, and there is some carpenter ant activity. The red maple has declined, and after clearance pruning for the parking lot there will not be much canopy left to sustain the declining tree.

Mr. Wiater explained each tree's decline, as noted in the above description.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Griffin moved to recommend removal of all three trees, seconded by Mr. Hanley. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **Parrott Ave at Junkins Ave:** 2 red maple, poor-to-fair conditions, removals requested and recommended by the City. Both trees are exhibiting signs of decline, though one tree can be pruned and monitored, but the other has more significant deadwood and lower in vigor.

Mr. Wiater said one of the red maples could be pruned but recommended removing the other one.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Ms. Chag moved to recommend removal of the maple that was in poor condition and prune the second maple, seconded by Vice-Chair Griffin. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **Austin St at Union St:** 1 little-leaf linden, poor condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. Recent storm damage has prompted this request. The tree has significantly declined and suffered from a stem failure.

Mr. Wiater said the tree was in a harsh spot that had a lot of impervious surface and potential construction damage.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Ms. Chag moved to recommend removal of the tree and replant with something more charming, seconded by Mr. Hanley. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **165 Richards Ave:** 1 Norway maple, poor condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. Recent storm damage has prompted this request. This tree lost a significant leader resulting in 50% canopy loss, and a defect exists where the remaining leader is attached. The remaining leader has cracks along the stem.

Mr. Wiater recommended that the tree be removed because it lost 50 percent of its canopy and was completely off balance.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Vice-Chair Griffin. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

- **224 Elwyn Ave (on Sherburne Ave):** 1 Norway maple, fair condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. Recent storm damage has prompted this

request. This tree is top heavy and weighted heavily over a structure. The absence of the neighboring tree may cause this tree to experience greater external forces due to the lack of protection.

Mr. Wiater explained that the tree on the right of the Norway maple was not removed because it added protection to the tree, but the other half of it failed in the storm. He said consequently, both trees were being considered for removal.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Griffin moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Hanley. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

3. New Business - Review of storm and damage that occurred on 6-18-26, including an optional site visit to Haven Park following the Committee meeting.

Mr. Wiater reviewed the trees that were lost in the storm, which included nine medium-to-large trees in Haven Park, three Norway maple and a large weeping willow in Wentworth Cemetery, and several residents' trees. Vice-Chair Griffin suggested that Haven Park be transformed into a park like Goodwin Park. He said he was concerned about the John Fitz monument that was blocked by two trees on Pleasant St and thought a professional could come up with a new landscape design so that the statue could be seen from the street. It was further discussed and decided that the suggestion would be reviewed with Mr. Rice when he returned.

Other New Business

Mr. Dupere said the catalpa tree on the corner of Spring and Broad Streets looked bad. Mr. Wiater said some compost tea application could be done. He said he did not think the crushed stone at the base of the tree was a problem and thought the damage was already done when the roots were cut. Vice-Chair Griffin asked if Mr. Rice sent the information to the Legal Department. Mr. Wiater said he had not followed up with him. Ms. Chag said she would follow up with that.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 12, 2026

The meeting **adjourned** at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault

Trees and Greenery Committee Meeting Minutes Taker