

TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY COMMITTEE
City of Portsmouth

MINUTES

7:30 AM – Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Members Present: Peter Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Department of Public Works; Leslie Stevens; Dennis Souto; Todd Croteau; A. J. Dupere; and Joan Walker. City Arborist Corin Hallowell was also present.

Members Excused: Dan Umbro

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

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

*The February 8, 2017 minutes were **approved** by unanimous vote with one minor amendment.*

2. Tree Removal Requests

There were no tree removal requests.

3. Update on Spring 2017 Plantings.

Mr. Croteau said that the document was circulating for signatures within City Hall and that the bid would go out any day. He said that the two weeks of snow delayed the process but thought the plantings would still take place in April.

Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Croteau to forward the bid document to him, and Mr. Croteau agreed.

4. Further Discussion of Planting Trees on Private Property.

Chairman Loughlin said he had an email from City Attorney Bob Sullivan saying that he thought the letters were fine. Chairman Loughlin said that Attorney Sullivan asked about working a tree grant program into the proposal and whether the Committee could contribute pertinent language to it.

Mr. Dupere discussed how some towns bought trees wholesale and in bulk so that the costs were reduced, and he explained the process. He noted one program in Concord, NH that was partially funded through the City of Concord. He said that Deputy City Manager Nancy Colbert Puff was interested in language indicating that the City was giving or “granting” something to the neighbor and suggested that the program be called the Tree Grant Program.

Mr. Hallowell said that he wrote a letter to Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff and also talked to City Manager John Bohenko, who seemed positive but wanted to ensure that the appropriate language was included. Mr. Hallowell said he also talked to the Portland City Arborist about their tree cooperative.

Mr. Rice said there were instances in Portsmouth where people wanted to contribute to trees in the City and that a trust could be established. For the short term, however, he said that, at present, there were limited privately-owned spaces that justified planting on them through a private/public partnership.

He said a grant program needed to be established and that he could work with Mr. Dupere, and that the program would eventually have a rating system for the site. He said they could also incorporate Mr. Hallowell's idea for private trees. He said they only needed a paragraph about a grant.

Chairman Loughlin agreed, noting that the Committee needed to have some encouragement to get trees in places where they thought they needed to be. He noted that the Portland program could be time consuming and said he cared more about a street that needed a tree for the aesthetics of the City.

Mr. Rice said he could work with Mr. Hallowell and use Mr. Dupere as a resource to do a quick review and change the language to a "grant application", or "tree grant program". He said the Committee should consider doing a short presentation to the City Council about the program and its benefits, noting that it would also get some publicity. He said he would speak to City Manager Bohenko about scheduling it to go before the City Council. Chairman Loughlin said it would also be helpful to do a breakdown on the time Mr. Hallowell spent on projects and the work he's done.

Chairman Loughlin read a provision from a recently-updated RSA about the responsibilities of tree wardens and trees that were in the right-of-way. It was then discussed.

Vice-Chair Adams asked whether Mr. Hallowell could submit a copy of the tree grant program and its pertinent language to the Committee. Mr. Rice said he would send a draft to the members in the next few weeks so that it could be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Old Business.

Mr. Hallowell said there was a Japanese lilac at 139 Clinton Street that he thought made sense to remove and replace with a large shade tree due to the lack of wires and lack of large trees in that neighborhood. He noted that they had recently removed a large red maple. He said the homeowner had asked for a tree in her yard, so he thought that the lilac could be placed in the tree right-of-way. The Committee members all agreed that it was a good idea.

7. New Business.

There was no new business.

8. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 12, 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary