

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

**MINUTES**

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, May 10, 2017**  
**Portsmouth City Hall**

**Members Present:** Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; Corin Hallowell, City Arborist; Joan Walker, and Dan Umbro

**Members Excused:** Leslie Stevens, A.J. Dupere, Dennis Souto

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

**1. Acceptance of Minutes of the April 12, 2017 Meeting.**

*The April 12, 2017 minutes were **approved** by unanimous vote.*

**2. Tree Removal Requests:**

Lafayette Park (tree hit by car)

Mr. Hallowell said that a car hit the tree and that it should be removed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved that the tree be removed, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

Vice-Chair Adams also noted that there was a small sapling in the area that had no future to it.

100 Colonial Drive (2 Linden Trees – one heaving sidewalk, one creating sewer problems)

Mr. Hallowell said he talked to the resident about the two trees and that the resident was concerned because, in addition to getting a new sports car, they also had problems with the sewer line and the roots. Mr. Hallowell said the trees were healthy and could not recommend removal based on anything that was not related to the trees themselves. Mr. Rice said it would set a precedent if the trees were removed.

Mr. Croteau said there was a problem with the sewer line next to one of the trees. Vice-Chair Adams said if the Committee used that as a rationale, trees would be removed all over the City.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to **deny** the request to remove the trees, and Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

196 Colonial Drive (Linden tree with extensive decay)

Mr. Hallowell said the small tree had enough decayed and missing wood that it was becoming structurally unsound. He recommended that the tree be removed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Walker moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

213 Colonial Drive (Silver Maple)

The resident Bruce Fournier was present and stated that the tree was heaving the driveway, that everything around the tree was ballooning out and that the tree was cracking the driveway and the sidewalk. Mr. Hallowell said the tree was very healthy and that the heaving issue shouldn't set a precedent of removing a healthy tree.

Chairman Loughlin said there was only so much room between the sidewalk and the street and that trees often had some effect on driveways. He told Mr. Fournier that the Committee was reluctant to remove the tree for that reason and also did not want to set a precedent. He said the tree had to be a serious safety hazard in order to be removed.

Mr. Fournier also noted that a lot of the trees on his street never got trimmed by the City.

Mr. Rice asked Mr. Croteau whether he could send someone out to look at the sidewalk. He asked Mr. Hallowell to assess the trees in the area to ensure that there were no dangerous limbs hanging down. As far as cutting the maple, he said it was the Committee's job to assess the trees in a public space and protect the greenery in the City, and that there had to be a safety issue to justify removal. He said past decisions had been to keep healthy trees standing unless there were mitigating reasons to remove them.

Chairman Loughlin suggested a motion that Mr. Croteau and Mr. Hallowell check out the tree as well as any nearby overhanging branches to see what relief could be provided but not remove the tree at that time. Mr. Rice asked that the motion be tabled until the Committee received the evaluation.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved that the tree removal request be tabled until Mr. Hallowell and Mr. Croteau assessed the situation and reported back to the Committee. Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

Vice-Chair Adams said that he previously looked at the tree and, having heard the resident's concerns, wanted to go back and re-assess the situation.

Public Indoor Pool (Pitch Pine)

Chairman Loughlin stated that the request was to remove a tree that was leaning over the facility's expensive glass roof.

Mr. Rice said it seemed to be leaning more over the administrative section of the building rather than the glass roof. Mr. Hallowell said the main concern was that the tree would hit the building if it fell. He pointed out that all the trees in that area would eventually be dead and that the Committee would have to replant, so given the fact that the roof was very expensive and that every other pine tree had dead or drying parts, he recommended removing the tree.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved that the tree be removed, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

3. **Proposed Building Permit Notice on Protection of Street Trees**

*The topic was tabled to the June meeting.*

4. **Committee Site Visit to Goodwin Park Regarding Proposed Park Renovations**

Chairman Loughlin said that Mr. Hallowell had discussed the park renovations with Nancy Carmer and that she suggested that the Committee do a site walk to see what was proposed.

Mr. Hallowell said that the Norway maple was proposed for removal because it blocked a clear view of the Civil War monument. He said the discussions regarding changes in the park began with residents' concerns that the park wasn't sufficiently lit and that there were overnight vagrants. He said they hired Robbie Woodburn to redesign the park and that one of the recommended changes was to remove a Norway maple because it blocked the view of the Civil War monument.

Mr. Hallowell distributed a design diagram of potential tree removals, noting that it was based on resident feedback and concerns from a public meeting. He said another public meeting would be held, which would result in a final design.

Chairman Loughlin suggested that the Committee do the site walk right after the meeting.

5. **Old Business**

Tree Planting Schedule

Chairman Loughlin asked for an update on tree planting. Mr. Hallowell that Site Structures would begin planting on Monday, May 15. Mr. Hallowell said they couldn't get a Sycamore maple, so they went with a Sugar maple, which he thought was an appropriate species. He said they also couldn't get two Trident maples, so they replaced them with a Sargent crabapple and a Hawthorn.

Vice-Chair Adams asserted that the future prospects for Sugar maples in NH were bleak owing to global warming and climate change, and that maple syrup production in NH was projected to end within a few decades. Mr. Rice said it was an interesting commentary that would be worthwhile highlighting about decision being made about tree species to accommodate climate change.

Chairman Loughlin noted that, of the 200 or so Sugar maples he had planted, over 50 were dead and many others were doing poorly, which was mainly the result of absorption of road salt. It was further discussed. Mr. Hallowell proposed planting a Sugar maple on Hillside Drive. Vice-Chair Adams suggested not planting that species because their future was bleak, but perhaps a Black gum. Mr. Hallowell responded that many gums had been planted in recent years and that he did not favor another.

*The Committee decided on a Red maple. Mr. Hallowell said he would look into it.*

57 Marcy Street

Mr. Rice stated that a tree on the back side of Prescott Park Pavilion died and that attempts were made with the property owner to address it, but the owner had not responded. He said that the City would reach out to the owner again and propose a cost share. If the owner didn't respond, Mr. Rice suggested that the City remove the tree and invoice the owner for the cost. He pointed out that the tree was a public safety issue that outweighed infringement on private property rights and should be removed.

Mr. Hallowell said the City could remove the tree without going onto the property by using a crane from Marcy Street and that it could be taken down to the height of the fence to save money.

Chairman Loughlin asked the Committee members whether they thought it was important to go forward and eliminate the hazard. They all agreed.

Mr. Rice suggested that the City continue to reach out to the owner. He said the Committee should consider the cost of removing the tree with a rented crane vs. the cost of the City accessing the property and removing the tree themselves. He said the cost differential might justify the City paying for the removal.

*The Committee agreed to go forward to eliminate the hazard.*

## 6. **New Business**

### North Church

Mr. Hallowell said that personnel from the North Church contacted him about a concern that a linden tree was growing into the wall of the church. Mr. Croteau said that a formal request was received to remove the tree and that it would appear on the next meeting's agenda.

### Televised City Hall Meetings

Mr. Rice said that even small committee meetings were likely to be televised in the near future.

### St. John's Church

Mr. Rice said the City had a procedural request from St. John's church for planting two trees. Chairman Loughlin said that the church personnel agreed to redo their parking plan, so the Committee agreed to participate on a public/private partnership and contribute two trees. He said that the church members already planted five trees, however, without coordinating it with the Committee, so he suggested that the Committee contribute the bid price of the two trees that were originally agreed to be planted. Mr. Rice asked that a motion be made so that the agreement was documented.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved that the City contribute or reimburse St. John's Church for the amount of \$1,070 for two flowering trees that were planted at the church's parking lot in accordance with the motion that the Committee approved the prior August or September. Ms. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

### Vaughan Mall Planting

Mr. Croteau said that the PS 21 Planting Group wanted to spruce up the area with a pilot program involving plantings in the central stage area starting on May 20. He said the picnic tables would be replaced with café-style tables and chairs and that ground cover would be planted. He said the project would be done in phases throughout the summer.

Dead Tree near North Church

Mr. Hallowell said that the dead tree near the North Church was under warranty and would be replaced this spring.

**7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 2017**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the June 14, 2017 Trees & Public Greenery Committee Meeting.