

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

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, April 12, 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; A. J. Dupere, Leslie Stevens, Dennis Souto, Joan Walker, and Dan Umbro

Members Excused: None.

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

1. Minutes of the March 8, 2017 Meeting.

The March 8, 2017 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

86 Colonial Drive (triple-stemmed Linden)

Mr. Hallowell told the Committee that the tree had already been removed.

607 Colonial Drive (Linden)

Mr. Hallowell stated that a large limb broke off the tree about and that the tree's cavity was decaying. He recommended that the tree be removed and replaced.

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

316 Dennett Street (silver maple)

Mr. Hallowell stated that the tree lost a large leader in the previous blizzard and would be removed in the future. He said it could remain for a while, but given that the central leaders were gone and the majority of the tree's weight was over the house, he suggested that it be removed and replaced. He noted that the house owner was okay with it.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Souto seconded.*

Ms. Stevens suggested that the Committee look at that side of the street for tree replacement because the area didn't have a lot of trees. Mr. Hollowell said it could go on the 2018 Tree Placement List, and it was further discussed.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Hanover Street (3 Japanese lilacs)

Mr. Hollowell introduced City Engineer Ryan Flynn. Mr. Flynn said the City wanted to redo the sidewalk and retrofit the trees with tree gates. He said that the top of the root system was almost at the top of the curb line and felt that it would be better to just start anew. Mr. Hollowell noted that putting a tree grate would be almost impossible unless the tree was raised. Mr. Flynn said they wanted to replace the trees in kind. Mr. Rice said he didn't think the trees were properly planted originally, and it was further discussed. Mr. Flynn suggested pouring a concrete footing around the tree and attaching the angle brackets of the gate. He described how it would be done.

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

3. Request for Consultation by Dave DesFosses of DPW and Woodburn Company, Landscape Architects, Concerning Tree Species for Maplewood Avenue Sidewalk Widening

Mr. Hollowell stated that the landscaper Robbie Woodburn had identified three appropriate species for the sites: Ginkgo, Black Gum, and Chanticleer. He noted that there were already pear trees across the street, so he felt that the Chanticleer could be ruled out.

Mr. Rice said that eventually the City would go for the full corridor, from Congress Street to the culverts on Maplewood Avenue. Mr. Dupere noted that Black Gums were tough and would get wide. Mr. Rice said it would end up being close to 16 feet wide.

Vice-Chair Adams said that the proposed tree species were entirely different in characteristics. Mr. Hollowell said they were rugged but agreed that they had a totally different look. It was further discussed.

Mr. Hollowell said he preferred the Black Gum, and Vice-Chair Adams agreed. Mr. Hollowell said the designer wanted just one species.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved that the Black Gum be chosen, and Ms Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

4. Discussion of Bid Process and Tree Planting for Spring 2017

Mr. Hollowell told the Committee that the bid was awarded to Site Structures. He said the other bidder was Salmon Falls Nursery, who missed the deadline. He said that the price was the same as last year, but for a dozen fewer trees, although he thought they would end up with more trees

Chairman Loughlin said that the Committee could use the same list if they found others in the next month or two. Mr. Hollowell said he already had a few minor changes, based on marking the trees and talking to residents.

Chairman Loughlin said the Committee could also use the list for the tree that the Committee previously agreed to donate to the St. John parking lot. He suggested that Mr. Hollowell recommend one.

The Committee briefly discussed the other bids. Vice-Chair Adams noted that some of the trees were very expensive compared to the others, and he asked the Committee whether they should think about not planting those in the future. Mr. Hollowell said they were just increasing the variety of trees and if it were done once in a while, it would increase the species diversity and the beauty of the City.

Chairman Loughlin asked what the difference was between the Trident maple and the Flame maple. Mr. Hollowell said the Flame was a normal red maple and the Trident was a short tree and grew like a pyramid. Vice-Chair Adams said that a Trident was planted 6-7 years before, close to Islington Street. Chairman Loughlin said he would go see it.

Ms. Stevens asked what the planting deadline was. Mr. Hollowell said it was May 19.

Mr. Hollowell told the Committee that Piscataqua suggested planting bare root trees and explained why. It was discussed further. Mr. Hollowell said that timing was the issue and that the trees had to be planted early. He said it might be worth buying a dozen bare root trees and comparing them with others. He also thought there were more options with bare root trees, especially in a northern climate. Chairman Loughlin said he didn't recall that the City had ever planted bare root trees.

5. 2016 Tree City USA Letter

Chairman Loughlin said that it was thanks to Mr. Croteau, Mr. Hollowell, and Deputy City Manager Nancy Colbert Puff that Portsmouth had been selected Tree City for quite a few years in a row.

6. Discussion of Arbor Day Activities

Chairman Loughlin asked whether the arborists were doing anything. Mr. Hollowell said he hadn't heard anything.

Mr. Hollowell brought up the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial in Goodwin Park and said it was in sad shape. He said the tree wasn't there anymore. He recommended erecting a granite post with the same slogan, and planting a tree next to it. He also suggested an alternative solution of not putting back the memorial in Goodwin Park but instead relocating it to another park, possibly Langdon Park, due to Goodwin Park's density and possible upcoming changes. Mr. Rice said he would have to look into it. Ms. Stevens said that her Girl Scout troop might be interested in volunteering. Mr. Dupere asked whether it had to be done on Arbor Day, and Mr. Hollowell said it could be postponed until later in the spring. It was discussed further.

Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Hollowell to draft a plan and email it to the Committee.

7. Update on Tree Grant Program

Mr. Hallowell said he passed it along and hadn't heard anything. Mr. Rice said he would follow up.

8. Old Business

Vice-Chair Adams asked what was decided about the two trees on Hunking Street. Mr. Hallowell said it was agreed that the one closest to the restaurant would get moved, but a storm broke the tree in half during the winter, so only the stump was left to be removed.

9. New Business

- Mr. Hallowell introduced Kevin Daley from Public Works. Mr. Daley said he was the pool technician and wanted to remove a red pine tree because it was growing at a 45-degree angle over the roof of the building. He said the members were concerned that it would come down on the fairly-new and expensive roof during a storm. He said the tree was on City property. He passed out two photos of the tree. Chairman Loughlin said the Committee would look into it.
- Ms. Walker said she was concerned about the cavalier way a City tree could be treated by someone building a private home and asked whether there were rules about parking excavators on the site and what could be done regarding City property when it came to a City tree. She said that a project in her neighborhood was considering serious re-grading and the neighbors were concerned because the tree was healthy. Mr. Rice said that if the tree was on City property and there was serious re-grading to be done, there had to be a slope easement. Mr. Croteau said the area also had to be fenced. Ms. Walker said the construction was talking place on the corner of Thornton and Burkett Streets and would impact the tree.

Mr. Rice said that projects that went through site review were usually scrutinized, but the smaller ones typically needed building permits. He said that Public Works would look into it. Chairman Loughlin asked whether it would be appropriate that the Building Inspector hand out documentation about how to treat trees that would cause the builder to consider it more. Mr. Rice said he thought that it was already referred to in the building permit. It was further discussed.

Chairman Loughlin asked the Committee to suggest some wording that could be added. Mr. Rice suggested that the Committee also touch base with the Planning Department.

- Mr. Souto asked what the process was for a dangerous tree that had to come down immediately. He asked whether Mr. Hallowell could make the determination before posting the tree and discussing it with the Committee. Mr. Hallowell said that a tree would be acted upon if it was an immediate threat to the public but felt that it was good to have a process so that he was covered. Mr. Croteau said that Public Works would do something immediately if there was a hazard. Chairman Loughlin said that sending out a 24-hour notice should be a rule of thumb if it wasn't a dire emergency.

- Mr. Hallowell told the Committee that the transportation engineer Erik Eby sent him an email about doing a bike share at the corner of Islington Street and Maplewood Avenue and needing to remove 3-4 shrubs. He distributed photos of the site. Ms. Stevens asked whether it had to be posted. Mr. Rice said he didn't think so. Chairman Loughlin asked whether the nearby Hawthorn trees would be affected, and Mr. Rice said they would not.

10. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 10, 2017

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the May 10, 2017 Trees & Greenery Committee Meeting.

