

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

MINUTES

7:30 AM – Wednesday, March 21, 2018
(Rescheduled from Wednesday, March 14, 2018)
Portsmouth City Hall

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

Members Excused: Dan Umbro

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the January 10, 2018 Meeting

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote to approve the January 10 2018 minutes*

2. Tree Removal Requests:

161 Cate Street – Locust (Requested by Resident):

Mr. Hallowell said the tree made it difficult to see the corner because the snow was piled there in the winter. He noted that the tree was also constantly hit by plows. He said the corner had become a dangerous blind corner and that there were concerns about street safety.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to remove the tree, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

Langdon Park – 1 Red Maple and 1 Sugar Maple (Requested by DPW):

Mr. Hallowell said the trees had declined to the point where there wasn't much left.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to remove both trees, and Vice-Chair Adams seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

420 Lincoln Avenue –Silver Maple (Requested by Resident):

Mr. Hallowell noted that there was a red maple as well as a silver one at the location and that both trees were fine. He recommended that the trees be pruned and that the silver maple be monitored.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved monitor the silver maple and not remove it at this time. Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

260 Miller Avenue – Silver Maple (Requested by Resident):

The resident David Hudlin was present to speak to the request. He said he wanted the tree to be removed because it reduced sight lines making it difficult to exit Spring Street onto Lincoln Avenue and also for him to back out of his driveway.

Mr. Halloway agreed that it was a legitimate safety concern. Mr. Rice agreed that it was a sight distance issue and that the busy street was a difficult one to back into.

Chairman Loughlin said the Committee was normally reluctant to remove healthy trees. Ms. Stevens said she agreed and said that sight line issues could potentially happen with any tree.

Mr. Hudlin noted that the tree was between the sidewalk and the curb and practically on the road, which made it more difficult for sight lines. Vice-Chair Adams said that if the tree were removed, a smaller tree planted in its place might present more problems owing to its lower crown of foliage. It was further discussed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to remove the tree due to the safety issue, and Mr. Rice seconded.*

There was further discussion. Ms. Stevens asked what would be planted in the tree's place. Mr. Hallowell said they could explore the Tree Trust fund and remove a portion of the resident's fence, allowing for planting on private property. They further discussed whether to remove the healthy tree and whether to replace it with a tree or not.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a vote. *The motion to remove the tree **failed** by a vote of 5-2, with Vice-Chair Adams, Ms. Stevens, Ms. Walker, Mr. Dupere, and Chairman Loughlin voting against removal of the tree.*

Eversource ETT Project:Adams Avenue at Dondero – White Pine:

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was damaged by wires, storms, and so on.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to remove the tree, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

Corner of Maplewood & Emery Street – 15 Trees:

Mr. Hallowell said the trees were up to the fence on the Maplewood Avenue side and that the City owned the small group of scrub on the Emery Street side, which he said Eversource also wanted to remove. He said Eversource had discussed planting where the scrub was and would also remove all the front trees to open up the substation. Ms. Stevens said it would be helpful to have something there and know what they would replant. Chairman Loughlin asked whether Eversource had a planting plan. Mr. Rice suggested having Eversource attend a meeting to discuss it.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved to table the motion and ask Eversource to attend a future T&G meeting and have a planting plan. Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

620 – 690 Woodbury Avenue – Norway Maple:

Mr. Hallowell noted that the tree was right in the wires and that Eversource offered to purchase a replacement tree. The resident Alan Gordon was present to speak to the request. He said he owned the 620 Woodbury Avenue property and was reluctant to take down the healthy tree. He asked whether the tree could be saved and whether its crown could be trimmed to get it out of the wires.

Chairman Loughlin said that the Committee had done that for other requests but that 620 Woodbury Avenue was a different situation because of Eversource's new requirements. He asked whether Eversource could put in two new trees on either side of the Norway maple in question, with the ultimate goal of removing the Norway at a later time, and not remove the maple tree for a year or two. Mr. Dupere said there was room to place some large trees and spread them out.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to delay removing the tree for a few years, ask permission to prune it, and plant two new trees of better quality on either side of the edges of the right-of-way. Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

673 – 717 Woodbury Avenue – Sugar Maple:

Mr. Hallowell stated that the tree fell into the same category as the tree they had just discussed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to retain the tree and prune it, and then plant trees on either side. Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

Chairman Loughlin then requested that the Committee jump ahead to New Business because the resident who had a request was present (see New Business).

3. Discussion of Species Selection and Design for Chestnut Street Extension Project by Terrence Parker, Landscape Architect

The project architect Terrence Parker was present and stated that the project was an extension of the work being done by the Music Hall. He explained what the City project would entail and said they wanted to plant four Black tupelos in a street rhythm between the TD Bank and the Rockingham Building. He said the area was currently anchored by a large honey locust and a linden. He discussed the Tupelo tree's growth pattern, along with other perennials they wished to plant.

Eric Weinberg of Altus Engineering stated that the planters in front of the Bullmoose Record Shop were removed for the project. He noted that they were drafting a Memo of Understanding for the final aspects. Mr. Dupere asked about the timing and the tree planting process. Mr. Hallowell said it would be part of the City's tree planting process and would be ready by June 1. He said they had discussed the planting requirements.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to accept a recommendation, and Vice-Chair Adams seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

4. Discussion of Maplewood Avenue Improvement Project by Raymond Pezzullo, City of Portsmouth Assistant to City Engineer and GPI Consultant

Assistant City Engineer Ray Pezzullo was present to speak to the request and referred to the packet of information that the Committee had. He stated that the project was a City project on Maplewood Avenue and adjacent avenues and that they were requesting the removal of several trees on Maplewood Avenue. He said they would replace the trees and also had a tree protection plan throughout the corridor. He explained how they were realigning some of the roadway and installing bike lanes and a grass strip area for safety as a buffer between the street and new sidewalk, all of which would necessitate the tree removals. Mr. Pezzullo showed a graph to the Committee indicating the project limits and realignment and also noted that the proposed locations for the new trees were included in the packets that the Committee members had.

Mr. Rice added that the project had been bid and was awaiting award. Chairman Loughlin noted that the project was teeing up the intersection for Maplewood and Woodbury Avenues and said the Committee had trouble with the neighbors when they previously tried to construct a small rotary. Mr. Pezzullo said they would do everything they could to protect the River birch that was currently in the middle of the intersection. Mr. Dupere asked which side of the road the tree was on. Mr. Pezzullo said it was on the right side of Maplewood Avenue and that they were eliminating the cut-through from Woodbury Avenue. He said the project would narrow travel lanes, improve sight distances, and so on.

Note: At this point, Mr. Rice left the meeting.

Vice-Chair Adams asked whether the teeing would be on the east side and was told that it would. He said the Committee planted three trees in that area a few years ago and asked whether those trees would be affected. Mr. Pezzullo said they would not because they weren't near the construction activity but would be provided tree protection as well.

Mr. Hallowell said the species type had been discussed and that it would be easier to choose locations and species when the line of sight was established. Mr. Dupere asked about time limits. Mr. Pezzullo said the contract would be award after final DPW approvals and thought that the work would start in the spring. Mr. Hallowell said the trees would probably be removed in May.

Vice-Chair Adams observed that the plan presented to the Committee seemed to show that the honey locust, tulip, and crap apple trees he previously asked about were in fact to be removed, as shown in the plan. This time Mr. Pezzullo said that the trees would in fact be removed. Vice-Chair Adams asked if they could be relocated. Mr. Hallowell said that replacing them shouldn't be a problem because there hadn't been a lot of growth on them, but he wasn't sure whether it was worth the cost of removing them since they could be replaced with similar trees. He said he would look at them again, and if they could be transplanted, he would have no problem with it.

Chairman Loughlin said they could discuss the actual removal of the trees at the April meeting. Mr. Hallowell noted that he received some feedback from the public but that there were no issues.

It was decided that the tree removals would be discussed at the April meeting and was recommended that a Greenman-Pedersen (GPI) representative be present at that meeting.

5. Discussion of Rotary Club International Tree Planting Project

Chairman Loughlin stated that the Rotary Club International wanted to plant 100 trees in every place in the country that had a Rotary Club. He noted that the Rotary Club President challenged every individual Rotary Club to plant one tree per member, and that 2,000 seedlings would arrive in Maine comprising four varieties of trees. He said the Rotary Club in Portsmouth would have 100 trees to plant. Chairman Loughlin said planting trees of that short height could be a challenge unless there was a special protected area. Mr. Hallowell asked who would monitor the trees after they were planted. Mr. Dupere noted that there were a few problems with the chosen species, such as blue spruce. Mr. Hallowell said the Club wanted the trees planted by April 22. The Committee discussed possible locations in which the trees could be planted. Vice-Chair Adams suggested making the trees available to homeowners in the City but thought the whole issue hadn't been thought out well. Chairman Loughlin said he didn't know if it was something that the Committee was in a position to address. Mr. Dupere suggested integrating the project into Arbor Day and inviting residents or a school group.

Action: Chairman Loughlin said he would contact the Rotary Club member Ben Wheeler and discuss whether the Committee was the appropriate organization for the project.

6. Update on Spring 2018 Tree Planting

Mr. Hallowell stated that all the letters have gone out and that locations were being firmed up. He said the species list was complete and just had to be put out to bid.

7. Update on Tree Maintenance Trust Fund

Chairman Loughlin stated that the City Council approved the fund.

Note: At this point, Mr. Croteau entered into the meeting.

8. Old Business

Chairman Loughlin noted that a number of suggestions had been made by Committee members at the previous meeting regarding supplemental materials, correspondence, and protection of trees. He noted that Mr. Rice had suggested changing the ordinance and site plan review regulations. Mr. Hallowell suggested that the Committee work on the issues a bit more, and Chairman Loughlin agreed.

Mr. Souto asked whether the Tree Maintenance Trust Fund would be governed by the same rules that the City's budget was governed by. Chairman Loughlin said it would be governed the same way any trust money was governed and that monies would have to be approved by the trustee or trust fund to be released. He said the Committee would not control it but could recommend that money be spent on a new tree, for example. He said he didn't think it would have to go through the City Council. He concluded that, once the funds were part of the Trust Fund, they could be used for anything anticipated in the Trust. The Committee discussed whether City funds were involved, and Mr. Croteau stated that it was no different than funds for parking, although it came from a different source.

9. New Business

City resident Karen Bouffard was present and said she was concerned about how the tree at the corner of Mt. Vernon and South Streets was damaged by snowplowing and how it caused a sightline problem for someone pulling out onto the street because of the huge amount of snow piled up against the tree.

She asked that the City find another location to place the snow so that it didn't kill the tree but also noted again that the tree obstructed sightlines.

Chairman Loughlin said the issue was beyond the normal purview of the Committee but that they could make suggestions. Mr. Rice said it was the only public space in that area to place snow, but that he and Mr. Hallowell would look at the tree. Chairman Loughlin said the Committee was sympathetic to the issue and hoped to reach a decision that would balance the two concerns with preserving the tree.

10. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 11, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary