

TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY COMMITTEE
City of Portsmouth

MINUTES

7:30 AM – Wednesday, April 11, 2018
Portsmouth City Hall

Members Present: Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Leslie Stevens; A. J. Dupere; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Corin Hallowell, City Arborist; Joan Walker; and Dan Umbro

Members Excused: Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Dennis Souto; Todd Croteau

Chairman Loughlin was absent, and Acting-Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the March 21, 2018 Meeting

The March 21, 2018 minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Tree Removal Requests:

225 Colonial Drive – 2 Norway Maples (Requested by DPW):

Mr. Hallowell said the two trees were in serious decline. He said he had not contacted the owner of the two trees and wasn't sure whether the owner wanted a tree replacement or not.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *It was moved, seconded, and passed to remove the two Norway maples.*

873 Maplewood Avenue – Norway Maple (Requested by DPW):

Acting-Chair Adams asked that the 873 Maplewood Avenue, 940 Maplewood Avenue, and 1236 Maplewood Avenue requests be grouped. Mr. Hallowell noted that the tree removals were part of the Maplewood Avenue improvement project. He said the city resident Amy Howard at 873 Maplewood Avenue had reservations about removing the tree for several reasons, and a copy of her email was distributed to the committee members.

Mr. Hallowell stated that the resident at 1238 Maplewood Avenue expressed concern about the removal of the tree at 1236 Maplewood Avenue because he didn't want to lose the tree's shade and that he was overall disappointed that so many trees were being removed along the avenue. Mr. Hallowell said he told the resident that he would work with him in getting a replacement for the tree.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to recommend the removal of the trees at the three locations, and Mr. Rice seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

940 Maplewood Avenue – Crab Apple (Requested by DPW):

The crab apple was grouped with two other tree requests and discussed (see 873 Maplewood Avenue request above).

1003 Woodbury Avenue – Hawthorn (Requested by DPW):

1003 Woodbury Avenue – Honey Locust (Requested by DPW):

1003 Woodbury Avenue – Tulip Poplar (Requested by DPW):

The three trees above were grouped together for discussion and a motion.

Acting-Chair Adams noted that the committee discussed the trees at the previous meeting. He said the trees were probably worth around \$1500 and that the committee would not have planted them about five years ago if they had known about the project. He said the committee in the future should be made aware of any potential projects. Mr. Hollowell agreed. He recommended that any new tree plantings near intersections or driveways be put further back.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Hollowell moved to recommend the removal of the three trees, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

1236 Maplewood Avenue – Silver Maple (Requested by DPW):

The tree was grouped with two other tree requests and discussed (see 873 Maplewood Avenue request).

3. Update on Spring 2018 Planting

Mr. Hollowell stated that the bid had gone to the Finance Department and should be ready soon, and that the requirements would be reviewed with the contractors. Acting-Chair Adams asked when Mr. Hollowell thought the project would start, and Mr. Hollowell said it should begin by mid-May.

4. Old Business

Acting-Chair Adams asked about the Eversource project. Mr. Dupere stated that part of it was some new Eversource requirements. Mr. Hollowell noted that Eversource owned the trees on the Maplewood Avenue side and were proposing to remove them and plant American arborvitae along the substation. He said that Eversource was aware of certain concerns and were willing to do whatever the City wanted, but that they preferred to remove the trees so that they didn't have to commit time and maintenance to them.

Mr. Hollowell distributed copies of a handout describing the culture and characteristics of the American arborvitae. He also gave out copies of an email from City resident Elizabeth Dinan, who requested that the trees not be removed.

Mr. Rice asked whether Eversource would stagger the planting, and Mr. Hollowell said there was no space to do so. He said the existing trees had been topped repeatedly and that Eversource would replant along the sides, in either case. He said Eversource would continue to top the other trees if the City did not want them removed.

Acting-Chair Adams noted that it was asked at the previous meeting whether Eversource had a planting plan and that it was also recommended that Eversource be present at the April meeting to discuss the plan. Mr. Hollowell said that Eversource couldn't be at the meeting and that he would let them know what the committee thought.

Mr. Rice asked whether the resident Ms. Dinan was against the removal of trees or whether she was more concerned that there was no plan in place. Mr. Hollowell said Ms. Dinan was requesting that the trees be trimmed instead of removed because they acted as a buffer for the substation and blocked some of the commercial spotlights from near businesses from reaching her neighborhood. Mr. Dupere said the arborvitae would do a much better job of doing that than the pines would, and it was further discussed.

Mr. Hollowell noted that the pines and lower vegetation on the Emery Street side of the substation would be removed along the substation fence. He said Eversource would grind the stumps and plant arborvitae along the fence line. He noted that the arborvitae grew to 10-15 feet, which would create a screen for the substation and also provide vegetation.

Mr. Dupere suggested that Ms. Dinan look at the existing arborvitae in the back to see what it looked like. Mr. Hollowell disagreed, noting that if the new arborvitae didn't grow as tall, the resident could be disappointed. He instead recommended telling Ms. Dinan that it would be an evergreen hedge. Mr. Hollowell said that Eversource was willing to wait until the trees died to remove them. Mr. Rice said he had no problem leaving the trees because they would die in due time and provided a lot of screening in the meantime. He also noted that removing the trees would change the feel of the road. Mr. Hollowell suggested that Eversource be allowed to remove the pine trees on the Maplewood Avenue side. He said the committee could revisit the issue in a few years.

Mr. Rice said Eversource would place arborvitae on that side afterward, so people could see what it would look like. He said the pines on Emery Street would have to be topped as well.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to delay the tree removals, with the exception of the Eversource properties. Ms. Stevens seconded.*

Acting-Chair Adams asked who would convey the decision to Ms. Dinan, and Mr. Hollowell said he would.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Acting-Chair Adams asked about the Rotary International project to plant a thousand trees in the city. He read the applicable minutes from the previous meeting, which stated that Chairman Loughlin would contact a Rotary member and that the committee would discuss whether the plantings were appropriate. Acting-Chair Adams said he didn't know whether Chairman Loughlin contacted the Rotary member or not.

Mr. Dupere asked who would maintain the trees. Mr. Hollowell said that a lot of the trees would die because they would be so small. He said he didn't feel that Portsmouth had a large enough piece of land available for the plantings. It was further discussed. Mr. Hollowell asked whether it was a project that the committee wanted to participate in. Acting-Chair Adams suggested voting on the issue and

putting it to rest. He said the committee was not the appropriate forum but could provide technical support.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Walker moved to deny the request to participate in the Rotary International tree planting project but to provide technical support. Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

5. New Business

There was no new business.

Ms. Stevens told the committee that her last meeting would be in June because her family was moving to Maine. Mr. Rice thanked her for her time and expertise, as did the rest of the committee.

6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 9, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary