

**Trees and Public Greenery Committee  
City of Portsmouth**

**MINUTES**

**8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, October 9, 2019  
Portsmouth City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Manager’s Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; City Arborist Corin Hallowell; Dennis Souto, A. J. Dupere, Dan Umbro, Michael Griffin, and Patricia Bagley

**Members Excused:** Peter Rice, Director of Public Works

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Chairman Loughlin called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**1. Acceptance of Minutes of the September 11, 2019 Meeting**

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **approve** the September 11, 2019 minutes as submitted.*

**2. Tree Removal Requests**

**1. 118 Richards Ave - Apple Tree - Resident Request**

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was in severe decline and recommended its removal.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *It was moved and seconded to **recommend** removal of the tree. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

**2. 446 Lincoln Ave – Linden Tree - DPW Request**

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was 80 percent dead and recommended its removal.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to **recommend** removal of the tree, and Mr. Griffin seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

**3. 133 Lincoln Ave - Mulberry Tree - DPW Request**

Mr. Hallowell said the tree was overgrown, all over the house, and in the wires, making it difficult to prune. He recommended removing it and replacing it with a tree that wouldn’t grow as broad and wide in that particular location.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to recommend removal of the tree and replace it with a different species, and Mr. Dupere seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **4. Langdon Park and Lincoln Ave - Red Oak - DPW Request**

Mr. Hollowell recommended removing the tree from the Tree Removal List because he wanted to try reduction pruning and see how much longer the tree could be kept. Vice-Chair Adams said he thought it was hopeless, noting that the tree's condition was the result of an entire summer of excavation done about 10 years before. Mr. Hollowell said he still wanted to try reduction pruning before deciding if the tree should be removed.

The request for the tree's removal was removed from the agenda.

#### **5. 21 Elwyn Ave- Red Maple - SAI Builders Request**

Pat Nysten of SAI Builders was present to speak to the request. He said they were approved by the Board of Adjustment to build a house on the lot, but the red maple's location in the right-of-way in front of the lot restricted vehicular access to the lot. He said they considered placing the driveway on the opposite side but were restricted by the grading. He showed several photos to the Committee, noting that they also had concerns about line of sight issues when backing out of the driveway. He said that overhead wires seemed to be routed through the tree, and he also thought the root system would likely be impacted by the excavation for the driveway. He said the original site plan was revised to push the house back to allow for more greenspace in front of the house and that they were willing to plant a few trees either on the property or in the right-of-way.

Mr. Hollowell said he preferred to view the layout in person to evaluate if a tree protection zone could be created. He said the wires weren't a concern because the tree could be pruned away from them, and he thought there could be a potential to keep the tree. Chairman Loughlin said the Committee was always reluctant to remove a healthy tree in the City's right-of-way. He asked whether continuing the request for another month would impact construction. Mr. Nysten said they wanted to lay the foundation down before winter and that he didn't see a way to install the driveway without removing the tree. Mr. Dupere suggested tackling the problem immediately instead of continuing it to the November meeting. Mr. Hollowell recommended that more than one tree should be planted if the tree had to be removed. He suggested that SAI fund the cost of four replacement trees, estimated to total \$2,000, and that the City plant them in a location that would benefit the neighborhood. Mr. Nysten said SAI would be amenable to whatever location the Committee decided on. Mr. Hollowell said he would further evaluate whether the tree could be saved, and if it couldn't, then SAI could compensate the City by paying for the four specimens that would be planted in the spring.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *It was moved and seconded to have Mr. Hollowell and his associate Chuck visit the site later that day to determine the feasibility of a driveway being placed at that location to serve that lot and its impact on the existing*

*red maple. If Mr. Hollowell determined that the negative impact would not warrant preserving the tree, the tree could be removed subject to SAI's responsibility to fund the cost of four trees, estimated to total \$2,000, for that lot and immediate neighborhood. SAI would also be responsible for the tree's removal.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously.*

#### **6. Behind Library - 2 Box Elders – Portsmouth Library request**

Mr. Hollowell said the City was helping the library create a wildflower meadow. He said one of the box elders had a lot of decay and the other one was small, so the City was asked to remove and replace them with two long-term specimens in the spring. Mr. Souto asked if a third tree, which he thought was a black walnut, could be saved. Mr. Hollowell said he would look into it.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to **recommend** removal of the two box elders, remove the third tree if it wasn't worth saving, and replace all three with appropriate species. Mr. Dupere seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

#### **7. 200 Chase Drive -2 Scotch Pines - Woodburn Associates**

Mr. Hollowell said the Committee previously agreed that the two Scotch pines would be removed and the other trees would be pruned.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Griffin moved to **recommend** removal of the two trees, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

#### **8. North Church at Pleasant St - Norway Maple – Resident Request**

Mr. Hollowell said the tree was in serious decline and noted that the City was also doing porous paving in that area.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to **recommend** removal of the tree, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

#### **3. Visiting Student**

Russ (last name indecipherable) said he was a Master Arborist pursuing a Master's degree and that one of his assignments was to attend a tree committee meeting. He reviewed his past career and thanked the Committee for allowing him to listen in on the meeting. He said it was good to see that tree removals were considered so thoroughly.

At this point, City resident Tom Smart said he had called Public Works about a mulberry tree on the corner of Elwyn Avenue and Lincoln Street. Mr. Hollowell said the Committee had just voted on removing the tree and would remove it with a more appropriate species.

#### **4. Old Business**

Mr. Hallowell said the tree removals were delayed because the new bucket truck was hit by a trash truck, but he felt that the tree removals would be caught up by December.

Mr. Hallowell said he hadn't yet decided on what replacement tree specimens would be planted on the Parrott Avenue parking lot.

#### **5. New Business**

Mr. Souto asked if there was an alternate room for the committee to meet in, noting that people were waiting by the elevator for the door to be opened due to recent changes in access to City Hall. Chairman Loughlin suggested the School Board Meeting Room.

Mr. Hallowell discussed the Tree Fund and said citizens could be reminded that donations were needed. Mr. Souto suggested attending a Rotary meeting to make its members aware of the tree fund but wasn't sure whether the Committee could solicit funds or not. Chairman Loughlin said he wondered whether it was a good idea to 'wake up the sleeping dog' by going to the City Council and reminding them about tree appropriation. The Committee decided to refer the matter to Peter Rice.

**Action Item:** The Committee will ask for Peter Rice's input.

Mr. Griffin asked if the row of trees on Greenland Road across from the Little League Park were City trees. Chairman Loughlin said he thought they were because they were planted as part of the intersection widening project.

**Action Item:** Mr. Hallowell said he would check on the trees and prune them if needed.

The Committee discussed whether salt or climate change damaged sugar maples. Chairman Loughlin referred to the 250 sugar maples he planted in the 1980s and said the ones planted near the road were dying and the ones near the cemetery were doing fine. Mr. Griffin said a sugar maple always showed stress in an urban environment. It was suggested that the Tree Inventory would be a good way to track the behavior of sugar maples. Mr. Hallowell said the bigger picture had to be considered, which included genetics, previous drought, climate change, and salt, and he noted that sugar maples were removed from the Tree List because they weren't street trees.

#### **6. Next Meeting - Wednesday November 13, 2019**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Committee Recording Secretary