

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

**MINUTES**

**8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, November 13, 2019  
Portsmouth City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Manager’s Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Patricia Bagley, Dan Umbro, and Michael Griffin

**Members Excused:** City Arborist Corin Hallowell, Dennis Souto, A.J. Dupere

**Also Present:** Chuck Baxter, Arborist Foreman

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

**1. Acceptance of the October 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **approve** the October 9, 2019 minutes as submitted.*

**2. Tree Removal Requests:**

1. Eastern red cedar - Market Street at the corner of Albacore Way - DPW request

Mr. Baxter said the tree blocked the Albacore signage and was difficult to mow around it, but was otherwise a healthy tree. He said replanting the tree would give it only a 60 percent chance of survival and would be labor intensive and would cost more than buying a new tree. Mr. Rice recommended that a proper amount of time be taken to transplant the tree correctly. Mr. Baxter said it might not be feasible to transplant the tree at all because eastern red cedars didn’t transplant well.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Vice-Chair Adams moved to recommend removal of the tree, and Mr. Rice seconded. The motion **passed** by a vote of 5-2, with Mr. Griffin and Ms. Bagley voting in opposition.*

2. Red oak - 680 Peveryly Hill Road - DPW request

Mr. Baxter said the tree was in severe decline and was a hazard because it was half dead.

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

Mr. Rice suggested delaying replanting a tree in that location owing to planned work in that area.

3. Five red maples at Maple Haven Park next to parking area - DPW request

Mr. Baxter said the section was previously overgrown and was re-cleared. He said the five maple trees are located at the entrance to the soccer field and should be removed in order to restore the entrance. He said they would plant grass and create a walking path from the parking area to the field.

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

4. Two areas at West Road proposed athletic fields - areas marked on maps mounted to stakes - DPW request

City Program Manager Dave Allen and CMA Engineer Phil Corbett were present to speak to the request. Mr. Corbett stated that CMA Engineers had received approvals from the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board and were in the process of obtaining State permits. He said there were different phases of the project that included the athletic fields, reconstructed regional stormwater ponds, and transfer stations. He said they were working with the City's arborists to revise some plantings, and that they also received recommendations from the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board regarding adjustments to mitigate potential impacts and to provide additional habitats, like shade trees for the athletes and spectators.

Mr. Griffin asked whether the 22 dawn redwoods would be planted in a row. Mr. Corbett said they would be staggered on top of a berm. Mr. Allen noted that Mr. Hallowell suggested species that the City was comfortable with. Mr. Corbett said the spacing would be 25 feet and would allow for tree maturity. He said the trees would be more of a grove and are tolerant of a wide range of soil types. In response to further questions, Mr. Corbett said the project was the contractor's responsibility but would be done according to the City's specifications; the property would be fenced in; and the walking path would be preserved and would eventually connect with the rail trail. He said the ponds were existing retention ponds that would eventually be state-of-the-art ponds.

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

### **3. Discussion of the Tree Fund**

Mr. Rice said there was only one small donation to the Tree Fund that he knew of so far, and he suggested advertising the fund better by including it on the City website. The tree planting budget was discussed. Chairman Loughlin said the tree planting program was one of the most important things that the City did and that it had transformed Portsmouth.

He said it was worth doing it at the taxpayer's expense. Vice-Chair Adams said it seemed unlikely that people would do much in the way of voluntary donations, and he recommended that the committee ascertain how the fund is or will be administered. Mr. Rice said the Trust held the monies, and if something was required, the committee would request it from the City Manager.

*Action Item: Mr. Rice will look into the issue further and report on it at the December meeting.*

#### **4. Report on 21 Elwyn Avenue (SAI Builders) tree removal request**

Mr. Baxter said the contractor was searching for another contractor to remove the tree. He noted that \$2,000 had been deposited into the Tree Planting Fund. Mr. Rice explained that the money was deposited into the Miscellaneous Capital Fund and couldn't be re-appropriated elsewhere. Mr. Griffin asked if all four trees would go on Elwyn Avenue. Mr. Baxter said the street needed shade and that four trees would easily fit at different sites along the street.

#### **5. Old Business**

The Maplewood Avenue project was discussed. Mr. Baxter said the trees on the left side would remain and the middle of the circle would have a centerpiece specimen tree. He said two or three swamp white oaks would be planted on the other side of the street but that he was waiting to see what everything proposed would look like in the spring.

#### **6. New Business**

Mr. Griffin asked if the maple tree at the post office would be compromised if the bolts on it were removed. Mr. Baxter said if the bolts remained, the tree would grow around them; otherwise, the tree would decay. Vice-Chair Adams said he and Mr. Hallowell had agreed that the bolts should be left in place when they visited the site last summer.

Mr. Baxter said the 2020 Tree List currently had 25 proposed sites. He said the City was thinking of using Schictel's Nursery in New York as a bare root grower because of their extensive root systems and transplant success. He said the trees cost a fraction of the normal tree price, so more trees could be planted in less time. He said there were a few options to explore that included: 1) doing a limited number, or 2) planting a lot of trees, and if a third of them were unsuccessful, it would still be more successful than planting burlap trees. He recommended that a decision be made before the new year or by the end of January. He said the caliper would be ¼-inch less than what the City currently plants but would be staked the same way and would include fencing in certain areas, like dog parks. Mr. Rice said the planting would depend on the spring weather but recommended that they be planted by mid-May at the latest.

*Action Item: Mr. Baxter and Mr. Hallowell will put together a step-by-step proposal to review at the December meeting.*

Chairman Loughlin wondered whether any of the trees at the Plaza 800 would survive the Islington Street beautification project after having backhoes and other construction equipment parked on top of their roots the entire summer. Mr. Rice said he thought the trees would be replaced because of a landscape easement. Chairman Loughlin noted that the original plan didn't include any trees from Plaza 800. Mr. Rice said he would find out what trees were planned to be put back.

*Action Item: Mr. Rice will get a copy of the planting list.*

Vice-Chair Adams said he had received several calls from the owner of 828 Woodbury Avenue about removing a splintered part of a tree. Mr. Baxter said he would look into it later that day.

Mr. Griffin said a woman named Kate Karos would drop off some literature about bacterial fungi tree supplements.

#### **7. Next Meeting - Wednesday, December 11, 2019**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Committee Recording Secretary