

**Minutes of the
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
City of Portsmouth**

**8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, November 18, 2020
Remote Meeting via Zoom Conference Call**

Members Present: Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; A. J. Dupere, Patricia Bagley, Michael Griffin, Dennis Souto; City Arborist Foreman Chuck Baxter.

Members Absent: Dan Umbro

Also Present: Citizen Deborah Chag

Vice-Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

At this point, Chairman Loughlin joined the meeting.

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the October 14, 2020 Meeting

The October 14, 2020 minutes were not available to approve. Mr. Rice said there was a new procedure and that he would look into it.

2. Tree Removal Request

- 45 Pearson Street – silver maple, resident request

Mr. Baxter said the tree removal request was from the Mayor to the City Manager but that he didn't know the reason. He suggested pruning the tree to reduce the canopy and then monitoring it, and he offered to make a motion. Mr. Rice asked that the property owner be contacted by certified letter before pruning the tree so that the committee could understand the property owner's concern.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Baxter moved to send a certified letter to the property owner identifying the genesis of the request and indicating that the City Arborist Foreman could do a retrenchment to cut back the canopy and then monitor the tree.*

Mr. Souto seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 7-0.

3. Update on Islington Street Tree Plantings

Chairman Loughlin asked for an update about the trees near Aldrich and Spinney Roads. Mr. Baxter said he met with construction manager Ryan Flynn to review the plantings. He said the plan would echo the original plan from four years ago for some of the

species. He said there was uncertainty about putting trees in once excavation was started but that they were able to make it work. He said there would be a large tree at the corner of Spinney Road, and that every pit would have a tree eventually. He said there would be large trees along the sidewalk at the Plaza 800 after the gravel was excavated. He noted that there were more tree pits all the way up to the White Heron cafe. Mr. Rice said that any trees going farther than the White Heron were pending bond authorization.

Mr. Griffin asked if there was an updated proposal for Plaza 800. Mr. Baxter said Mr. Flynn had it and had simply adopted the original plans from a few years ago. He said he would email it to the committee members.

Action Item: Mr. Baxter will email the Plaza 800 proposal to the committee members.

Chairman Loughlin asked whether the tree wells on the south side of Islington Street would have trees. Mr. Baxter said there was a total of four tree wells in that area, two of which had silva cells. He said the two between Thaxter Road and Aldridge Road did not have silva cells. He said the south side would be excavated to get a tree in each hole and that all the gravel material would be removed and replaced with a new planting mix before the trees were planted.

4. **Old Business**

Mr. Griffin asked about the revised 2020 planting schedule. Mr. Baxter said he had sent out the finalized schedule and that the planting season would be very successful. Mr. Rice added that the City's ability to execute the schedule would depend on what stage the pandemic was in and whether there was reduced staff or not.

5. **New Business**

Mr. Rice introduced citizen Deborah Chag. Ms. Chag noted a few of the projects she was working on, including a tree identity project in the Little Harbor area and the 200th Olmsted Anniversary national program. Mr. Rice said that Mr. Baxter had been working with Mr. Dupere on doing a tree inventory for all the street trees and that he could provide Ms. Chag with GIS information and perhaps a few trees to add to her inventory.

Ms. Chag asked what happened to the beech tree on the Masonic Temple parking lot. Mr. Baxter said the tree had substantial canopy decline about four years ago and that the City tried to preserve the tree thereafter, but the tree then rotted from the inside out and had hazardous limb loss. Mr. Rice explained that the City had an agreement with the Masonic Temple to help maintain the tree, and when the tree started to fail and was a risk, the City connected the Temple personnel with a company which was able to remove the tree free of charge. Chairman Loughlin said it would be nice to have an agreement with the Temple to plant a few trees instead of having the area paved over. Mr. Rice said the City's agreement expired soon and the Temple had other plans for the lot, but he thought it was worth reaching out to them.

Mr. Griffin noted that that the swamp white oak on Brewster Street had a safety tree enclosure. Mr. Baxter said that contractor had done it and that there were also a few at Rock Street Park. Mr. Griffin said the enclosure was well thought out.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Committee Recording Secretary