

Trees and Public Greenery Committee
City of Portsmouth
MINUTES

8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, February 10, 2021
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, Dan Umbro, and Dennis Souto

Members Absent: Arborist Foreman Chuck Baxter

Also Present: Corin Hallowell, City Arborist

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the January 13, 2021 Meeting

*The January 13, 2021 minutes were **approved** as presented by unanimous roll call vote.*

2. Tree Removal Requests

Eversource Requests:

4 Robin Ln, red oak
2 Coakley Rd, white ash
100 Woodbury Ave, Norway maple
66 Boyd Rd, maple
8 Boyd Rd, red oak
570 Dennett St, white ash
570 Dennett St, red maple
508 Dennett St, silver maple
500 Dennett St, red maple
436 Dennett St, red maple
60 Walker St, box elder behind fence
340 Thornton St, Pin oak
295 Thornton St, Norway maple
Parrott Ave Parking Lot, pin oak
Corner of Junkins Ave and Pleasant St, Norway maple
45 Lincoln Ave, linden
134 Lincoln Ave (on Elwyn Ave), Norway maple
Clough Dr, heading into Little Harbor School, 2 lindens
52 Haven Rd, Norway maple
7 Brackett Ln, white ash

11 Brackett Ln, 1 double-stemmed Norway maple 79 Spinney Rd,
black cherry
61 Cabot St, white ash
528 Middle St on Madison St, red maple
133 Orchard St, 3 pin oaks

The representative for Eversource Scott Richardson was present to address the list of tree removals. Chairman Loughlin asked Mr. Richardson how he determined whether trees needed to be removed or pruned. Mr. Richardson said it was the location and condition of the tree. Mr. Hallowell said he knew which trees on the list were in poor condition. He said other trees would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Chairman Loughlin asked if there were members of the public who had comments or questions. Gene Fisk said his company agreed with Eversource that the tree on 500 Dennett was a candidate to remove because it was in the power lines. He said the property owner approved the removal and that it could be replaced. Mr. Hallowell said the trees on Dennett Street would go into the triple phase and would have to be removed.

Maryann Chanuk believed the 436 Dennett Street tree was on her property. She said she and Mr. Baxter agreed that the tree could be pruned and removed at a later date.

Ryan Brandt of 570 Dennett Street asked how residents would know if the trees in front of or near their property were to be removed or pruned. Mr. Hallowell said all the marked trees were slated for removal. Mr. Richardson noted that Eversource normally received permission to prune trees and that the residents would know whether the tree would be removed or pruned. Mr. Brandt asked what his rights as a homeowner were. Chairman Loughlin said permission was needed from the Trees and Greenery Committee and the City Arborist to remove a tree in the City's right-of-way and that the City coordinated it with Eversource.

Chairman Loughlin suggested continuing the Dennett Street trees to the March meeting so that more information could be provided to the City. Mr. Rice said the right-of-way database could be accessed on the City's website and was called MapGeo.

Diane McNabb asked why a tree on Clough Drive that wasn't near power lines was slated to be removed. Mr. Hallowell said it had a large split in it.

Mr. Griffin said the owners of the red oak on Boyd Road asked if the tree could be saved. Mr. Richardson said the trees slated for removal were based on their health and how close they were to the power lines, but that the Boyd Road tree could possibly be pruned.

Andrew Whittaker of 133 Orchard Street said the three trees posted for removal in his area were in his front yard and that it would be a problem aesthetically and because of erosion. Mr. Dupere said the trees were on the property line and had root damage. He said they would have to be pruned, and if they were replaced, it would take years to grow to the size of the existing trees. Mr. Whittaker said he wanted to keep the trees.

Andrew Menard of 61 Cabot Street said the white ash in front of his house was also in an abutment in the road that helped slow traffic speed down. He asked if it could be replaced and if the abutment could remain. He said it was also close to his foundation and suggested dwarfing the tree instead. Mr. Dupere said the City didn't encourage trunk dwarfing because it leads to more rot. He said the tree was on a short timetable because it would eventually be impacted by the emerald ash borer and it was close to the power lines. Mr. Menard asked if the tree could be monitored.

Peter Berg said the linden tree on Lincoln Avenue was pruned for many years and that there were a few trees at the foot of Junkins Avenue that had been there a while. Mr. Hallowell said the linden had a lot of sucker growth. Mr. Berg said the tree was unattractive but cast a lot of shade in the summer, and he thought it could continue to be pruned. Mr. Dupere said the pin oak on Parrott Avenue was ugly but healthy, just in a tough spot. He said the corner tree had significant dead wood. Vice-Chair Adams said the tree on 45 Lincoln Avenue caught fire back in 2012 as a result of shorted power lines brought down by a fallen tree and had its main leader destroyed. He thought it was a good opportunity to remove and replace it with an appropriate tree of the right size and species.

Theresa Hill of 340 Thornton Street said there was a large pin oak in front of her property that had its trunk cut and was healthy, even though a power line went through the canopy.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Umbro moved to **table** the consideration of the 8 Boyd Street tree, all the Dennett Street trees, the 340 Thornton pin oak, the Parrott Avenue pin oak, the Junkins Avenue corner tree, the 45 Lincoln Avenue linden, the 61 Cabot Street white ash, and the 133 Orchard Street trees so the March 10 meeting so that Mr. Baxter or Mr. Hallowell could present more information on them.*

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

Mr. Hallowell said the remaining trees on the list were for removal but that some of them could be pruned instead. He said the two trees on Clough Drive would be removals. Mr. Richardson said they wanted to see all the other trees on the list removed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice **moved** to recommend removal of the two Clough Drive trees and to **table** the rest of the trees to the March 10 meeting so that Mr. Baxter could brief the Committee as to whether removal or pruning would be preferable.*

*Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

Resident Request – 55 Leavitt Avenue, American elm

Mr. Hallowell said the tree had Dutch elm disease and should be removed.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to recommend **removal** of the tree, and Mr. Dupere seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

DPW Requests – Lang/Longmeadow Road Connector

Chairman Loughlin recused himself from the following request. Vice-Chair Adams was Acting Chair.

David Desfosses of the Department of Public Works was present. He said the plan was to re-orientate Lang Road toward Longmeadow Road at the traffic signal, which would alleviate the current traffic snarl and frequent accidents. He said the trees on the Service Credit Union property were in the City's right-of-way and needed to be removed to put the new road in. He said some trees had to be removed for parking spaces and to install a stormwater device, and that the rest of the trees were mostly scrub.

Acting-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend **removal** of the trees to allow the safety improvements in installing the roadway. Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. Watson's Landing Subdivision Request Regarding Tree Species

Erik Saari of Altus Engineering was present. He said the development would be a private subdivision on a cul-de-sac with four lots and would have a private road, so some street trees would need to be planted along the City's right-of-way. He said the road would be done by the end of summer and that planting could be done in the fall.

Mr. Hallowell said a site walk would have to be done before a tree species could be recommended. Mr. Rice noted that City sewer easements ran along the edge of the shoreline and had a lot of trees growing over it, and if a line failure occurred, the City would have to remove trees as needed to get the line repaired and that it would not be part of the project. Chairman Loughlin said the Technical Advisory Committee would be apprised that Mr. Saari met with the Trees and Public Greenery Committee and that the road would be deferred until it was known where the best locations for the trees would be.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Griffin recommended **conditional approval** and that tree species would be recommended at a later date. The motion was seconded and **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

3. Old Business

There was no old business.

4. New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meeting: Wednesday March 10, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Committee Recording Secretary