

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

**8:00 a.m. – Wednesday, March 10, 2021**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom Conference Call**

**Members Present:** Peter J. Loughlin, Chairman; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Chuck Baxter, Arborist Foreman; A. J. Dupere, Patricia Bagley, Michael Griffin, Dan Umbro, Dennis Souto

**Members Absent:** Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman

**Also Present:** Scott Richardson, Eversource Representative

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

**1. Acceptance of Minutes of the February 10, 2021 Meeting**

*The February 10, 2021 minutes were **approved** as presented by unanimous roll call vote.*

**2. Community Garden – Patricia Donahue**

Resident Patricia Donahue said she had a small garden design and maintenance business and wanted to know if there were properties in Portsmouth that could be designated for a community garden. She said she would need at least a half-acre of flat land with a water source, parking, easy access, and at least six hours of sun a day. Mr. Dupere said there were a few community gardens in the city. He said they could be challenging but that there were also a lot of positives. The Committee discussed a few of the existing community gardens in the city. Mr. Rice said they were usually maintained by people in the neighborhood and didn't need the Department of Public Works' involvement except for an annual water source. He said the process involved creating bylaws for membership, having a person or committee responsible for the garden, and doing soil testing. He said the City would be happy to work with Ms. Donahue to identify potential city parcels. He asked Ms. Donahue to return with a proposal for the committee to review and approve either by an administrative approval or forwarded to the City Council for final approval, depending on the garden's location and requirements. Mr. Baxter said he could be Ms. Donahue's contact and that he knew of a few appropriate areas for a community garden.

**3. Tree Removal Requests**

**Resident Requests:**

- 383 Islington Street (tree is located on Salem St) – 1 Norway maple

Mr. Baxter said that the tree itself was on Salem Street. He said the resident at 383 Islington Street originally asked that the tree be pruned. Mr. Baxter said he determined that the tree was 85 percent dead and that pruning wouldn't help it. He said the resident requested a replacement tree.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Souto recommended that the tree be removed, and Ms. Bagley seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

- **2 Ruth Street – 2 box elders**

Mr. Baxter said the trees were one box elder and one Norway maple and that they were under the power lines and in severe decline. He said DPW had been there many times in the past to pick up large limbs and that it was time to remove them and perhaps replant a nicer and more appropriate specimen. The owner of 2 Ruth Street PrimoTosi was present and said he would like a new tree planted on the opposite side of the driveway so that the branches wouldn't interfere with the power lines. Mr. Rice suggested that Eversource remove the tree as part of its regular operations and if it wasn't possible, then the City would remove it.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Rice moved that the tree be removed by either Eversource or the City and replanted in 2022, and that Mr. Baxter coordinate it. Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

**Eversource Requests:**

- **Borthwick Avenue at Route 1 Bypass – 2 honey locusts**

Mr. Baxter said the trees were under high voltage lines and were a public safety issue. He said the trees should be removed before they matured.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Griffin moved to remove the two trees, and Ms. Bagley seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

- **73 Coakley Avenue – 3 weeping cherry trees**

Mr. Baxter said the three trees were directly under the utility lines. The owner of 73 Coakley Street Chip Johnson was present and asked why the trees had to be cut down. Mr. Baxter said the trees would be in such a shape as to be an embarrassment to the City and that replacement trees could be planted. The resident said he would decide whether he wanted new trees or not.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Souto moved to remove the three trees, and Mr. Griffin seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

- **501 New Castle Avenue – 1 sugar maple**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was decayed and recommended that it be removed. He noted that he had not spoken to the owners because they were in Florida.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Griffin moved to remove the tree, and Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

Mr. Rice asked if the owners received a letter about the tree's removal, and Mr. Richardson said that Eversource had not sent a letter. Mr. Rice said he wanted the owners to be aware of the tree's removal.

*Mr. Dupere moved to **amend** the motion and recommended that the City have communication with the property owner who abutted the tree prior to removing the tree. Mr. Rice seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

At this point, Chairman Loughlin lost contact with the Zoom meeting and Mr. Rice was Acting Chair.

- **Entrance to Post Road off Heritage Avenue – 1 white pine**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was close to the utility wires and was a safety issue.

Acting-Chair Rice asked for a motion: *Mr. Souto moved to remove the tree, and Ms. Bagley seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

- **Cardinal Lane – 2 maples**

Mr. Baxter said the two maples were actually red oaks. He said they were small trees that were growing into the wires and that it was better to remove them before they grew larger.

Acting-Chair Rice asked for a motion: *Ms. Dupere moved to remove the trees, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

- **680 Peverly Hill Rd (opposite DPW) – 1 red oak**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was inches away from the high voltage lines. Mr. Souto said there seemed to be a lot of trees along that road that would soon have to be removed. Mr. Richardson said that particular circuit of trees was trimmed the previous fall but that the red oak was excluded because it was too close to the wires. He said he didn't think anything else would be done for at least four years. Acting-Chair Rice said a sidewalk would be built in two years that might impact the other trees due to the relocation of utility wires, but that it would be determined at a later date.

Acting-Chair Rice asked for a motion: *Ms. Souto moved to remove the tree, and*

*Mr. Umbro seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

At this point, Chairman Loughlin rejoined the meeting and Acting-Chair Rice resumed his normal seat.

- **201 Kearsarge Way – 1 Norway maple**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was close to the power lines and that it would potentially fail due to the amount of storm damage that the area had. Mr. Richardson agreed and said the tree was damaged.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Ms. Rice moved to of the tree, and Ms. Bagley seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

**4. Follow-up on Eversource Requests from the February 10 Meeting**

Mr. Baxter said most of the trees, especially on Dennett Street, were poor specimens because of the way they were pruned around the utilities and that it would be a safety issue if the trees were continued to be pruned instead of removed. He said the removed trees would be replanted in 2022 and would be offset from the wires. Chairman Loughlin asked if some of the trees were pulled from the original consideration to remove. Mr. Baxter said he didn't know of any trees on the list that had any other options other than removal. He said the owner of the tree at the corner of Junkins Avenue and Pleasant Street was concerned, but Mr. Baxter said the tree would just be pruned and that he would follow up with the owner. Mr. Baxter said the resident at 570 Dennett Street was interested in replacing a tree in 2022. Mr. Griffin said he would vote against the red oak on 8 Boyd Road because he wanted it saved by pruning.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion: *Mr. Griffin moved to recommend removal of all the trees except for the tree on 8 Boyd Road. Ms. Bagley seconded.*

The tree was further discussed. Mr. Baxter said the tree was quite large and that half the tree would be left if the larger leader was pruned off and would have to be removed in 3-4 years. He said the tree was interfering with the power line. Chairman Loughlin said it could be pruned and that Eversource could remove it later on.

*The motion **failed** by a vote of 4 to 3.*

The Committee further discussed the tree removal list and noted that the trees for removal were not specified before. Due to the confusion, Mr. Rice suggested that the list be clarified and reviewed at the April meeting. Ms. Bagley suggested amending the motion to include the fact that some trees would be pruned and some would be removed. Mr. Baxter said all the trees on the list were vetted by

him and Mr. Richardson for removal, except for the ones at 133 Orchard Street and the corner of Pleasant Street and Junkins Avenue.

*Mr. Griffin moved to **amend** his motion and remove all the trees but the ones at 133 Orchard Street and on the corner of Pleasant Street and Junkins Avenue.*

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

## **5. Old Business**

Mr. Dupere said he would contact Ryan Brandt at 570 Dennett Street about a plan to replant a tree.

## **6. New Business**

There was no new business.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Committee Recording Secretary