

**MINUTES of the**  
City of Portsmouth  
**Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting**  
**September 8, 2021**

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

**Members Absent:** Dennis Souto

---

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

**1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the August 11, 2021 Meeting**

The minutes were approved as presented.

**2. Tree Removal Requests**

**69 Mendum Avenue – One Norway maple, resident request**

Sarah Cullen of 76 Mendum Avenue was present to speak about the tree and said the tree looked very frail. Mr. Baxter said he looked at the tree a few weeks ago and that it had gotten progressively worse over the last five years. He said it was a hazardous tree with a large portion of decay and would fail at some point. He added that it had no good future in its present location anyway because it was two inches from the pavement.

Chairman Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved to recommend removal, which was seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote.*

**3. Old Business**

The committee briefly discussed the trees on Bartlett Street and if they were in dispute.

Mr. Baxter said the red pines on Peirce Island were scheduled for removal.

Mr. Baxter said he had a count of the 2021 tree plantings and that only five trees were dead out of 100 trees. He noted that the Islington Street trees were under warranty from the contractor.

The issue of whether hedges encroaching sidewalks should be trimmed was discussed. Mr. Rice said if enough citizens were concerned about it and brought it before the City Council, it would be easier for his department to accomplish. Mr. Baxter noted that there was a particular hedge on the corner of Woodbury Avenue and Bartlett Street that made the sidewalk barely passable, even though the owner made an effort to shear it.

The Committee discussed who determined where the next street plantings would go. Mr. Baxter said it was usually a resident request. He said Public Works went from a full day of watering to a half day because this year's plantings were focused on particular areas, so the watering route was split up. He said the street plantings were postponed to 2022 and that he would find other neighborhoods that needed trees. He said there were currently 12 resident requests for plantings and that Eversource requested that some small trees under the wires be replaced. He said the process for resident requests for tree plantings was that the resident contacted him and he visited each site in the fall to decide if it was a good site for a tree and whether it should be a small or large tree. He said he used to work with the homeowner to decide the species but that it was too difficult to match the homeowner's choice with the available nursery stock, so now the tree was chosen based on soil samples and the urban tolerance species. He said the biggest issues were diversity as well as a tree that was native to the eastern United States, especially with changing environmental conditions. He noted that the southeastern bald cypress tree had proven to be a nice alternative. He said the five trees that died were zelcovas, which didn't come with a ball and root system, and one white swamp oak. Zelcovas were further discussed.

Mr. Rice said Eversource was trying to schedule removal of trees along Little Harbor Road, which would entail large cranes that would block the roadway. He said he was meeting with the fire and police departments to coordinate the effort and that pedestrian traffic down the roadway would likely be impacted. He said he would ensure that everyone was made aware of the issue.

Ms. Chag asked what the process was to remove a substantial tree on private property. Mr. Rice said the property owner was required to get a permit to block the street but that the tree removal didn't require anything from the city.

#### **4. New Business**

Mr. Griffin said he received a letter from a resident asking if a tree too close to his house near Goodwin Park could be pruned by the city or removed. Mr. Baxter said the city pruned it every other year and that he inspected the tree and found no hazards. He said if the tree was in close proximity to the resident's building, it could be trimmed to allow more clearance. Mr. Rice said if the tree was healthy, it didn't warrant removal. He recommended that Mr. Baxter find out whether the tree's canopy could be raised, noting that it might take a few years to do it fully.

Mr. Baxter noted that Goodwin Park was losing several trees. He said the sugar maple was being removed and one of the European beeches was dead and had to be removed. He said two magnolias were lost in the past year and that the Norway maple at the park entrance was removed so that the monument could be viewed better. It was further discussed.

Mr. Rice said the monument restoration at Haven Park was phenomenal. Mr. Griffin asked if it was appropriate to plant a tree for the big sugar maple that was removed from the middle of the park, and Mr. Rice agreed.

The issue of weeding vegetation in the city was discussed. Mr. Rice said an issue was how to install new greenscape that didn't require much effort. He noted that weed control was cut from

the budget a few years before and that his department was trying to reduce the need for weeding because they only had so many resources.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, October 13, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault

Trees and Public Greenery Committee Recording Secretary