

**TREES AND PUBLIC GREENERY COMMITTEE
City of Portsmouth**

MINUTES

**7:30 AM – Wednesday, September 9, 2015
Portsmouth City Hall**

Members Present:

Richard Adams, Vice-Chairman; A. J. Dupere, Leslie Stevens; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works, Todd Croteau, Public Works General Foreman; and Dennis Souto.

Members Excused: Chairman Peter Loughlin

Vice-Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

1. Minutes of the August 12, 2015 Meeting.

*The motion to approve the August 12, 2015 meeting minutes was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

2. Tree Removal Requests:

307 Wibird Street

Ms. Stevens commented that it would be helpful if the Committee had an understanding of who was asking for tree removals and whether it was related to construction, residential or utility issues. She mentioned a grid but wasn't sure who had put it together. Mr. Rice added that photos would also help. He suggested doing a standard tree removal request form listing the type of tree, address, and problem description that could be available on line, and he said he would bring a mock-up for the next meeting.

Vice-Chair Adams stated that he met with the homeowner Ms. April Wienands, who said the mountain ash was dying. He also noted that Chairman Loughlin had offered to plant a honey locust, but Vice-Chair Adams didn't think it would be appropriate for that location because the site wasn't big enough. He said he sent a list of small flowering trees to Ms. Wienands, and she and her husband opted for a kousa dogwood. Vice-Chair Adams commented that the soil was terrible, and he asked Mr. Croteau whether or not he could amend the soil. Mr. Croteau agreed that he could.

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

57 Marston Avenue

The owner Ms. Fay Rubin was present and stated that she wanted the dead red maple removed. She noted that the recent sewer and water project did it no favors. Mr. Croteau remarked that the City Arborist Mr. Corin Hallowell had looked at the tree and agreed that it should be removed.

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Souto moved that the tree be removed, and Mr. Croteau seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

Ms. Rubin then asked whether a replacement tree would go on the property, and Mr. Croteau replied that it wasn't necessary but that they could provide one if requested. Mr. Dupere said they would most likely replant in the spring after the construction project was finished.

325 Thaxter Road

Mr. Croteau said that Chairman Loughlin had suggested that the sugar maple be removed, which he agreed with because it had been excessively pruned by the utilities company and was precarious.

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Dupere moved that the tree be removed, and Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

300 West Road (small tree in drainage area)

Mr. Dave Desfosses of Public Works was present and stated that the commercial plaza was constructed in the 1980s and there were drainage issues. He said that the City would spend a lot of money reconstructing the lower section, and he discussed the access road and how the pipe would be upsized to handle the extra drainage. He noted that one tree had already been removed but didn't know by whom, and he said the removed trees would be replanted. He asked the Committee what species would be appropriate to replant. Ms. Stevens asked Mr. Desfosses if the curb would be changed, and Mr. Desfosses replied that it would not. Vice-Chair Adams asked Mr. Desfosses if he needed to know the recommended species right away, and Mr. Desfosses said he didn't because it was an open item in the contract. He noted that there were sewer and gas mains and drainage in the grass strip, over which the trees would be planted. Vice-Chair Adams asked how many trees Mr. Desfosses wanted installed, and Mr. Desfosses replied two trees. Vice-Chair Adams stated that he would get the Committee's suggestions to Mr. Desfosses.

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved that the 2" diameter sapling at the West end of the road be removed, and Mr. Souto seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

West Road Project (12" Pin Oak)

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Ms. Stevens moved to remove the 12" pin oak on the grass strip at the bend, and it was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

Parrott Avenue Parking Lot – Junkins Avenue Sidewalk Reconstruction

Brian of Public Works was present and said he was in charge of reconstructing the parking lot. He passed out a diagram and photos of the trees to the Committee, saying that 12 small trees were posted and the biggest one was probably 6 inches. He wanted to replace them due to the sidewalk reconstruction and needed guidance about the species to put in. He noted that most of the existing trees were struggling and burning from the top down due to salt impacts from the parking lot. Ms. Stevens asked whether the trees would go into boxes, and Brian said they would. Mr. Desfosses said

Public Works would place them in raised planters to give them a better chance at survival. Brian said he wanted to plant 11 trees and remove 12 due to the size of the spacing. Mr. Rice asked whether they could work around the trees since they were healthy enough to transplant, but Mr. Desfosses said there were issues with incorrect spacing. Mr. Rice asked about the treatment on the Parrott Avenue side and whether the trees could be transplanted to that strip. Mr. Desfosses said they could look into it. Mr. Dupere asked whether the tree removal would be done in-house, and Mr. Croteau replied that it could be. Mr. Desfosses noted that the construction project would begin in the winter, and Mr. Dupere said that allowed them time to remove the trees and transplant them.

Vice-Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved that the trees on Junkins Avenue be removed, and Mr. Rice seconded. The motion was **approved** by unanimous vote.*

3. Review of Proposed Plantings for Tuscan Kitchen Restaurant (discussed at August meeting – former Jerry Lewis Cinema site)

It was agreed that a site walk would be held on Monday, September 14, at 9:30 a.m. for three sites: West Road, Tuscan Kitchen, and Parrott.

4. Discussion of Species for Replacement Trees at Parrott Avenue Parking Lot

This was combined with the previous item, the Parrott Avenue Parking Lot – Junkins Avenue Sidewalk Reconstruction.

5. Old Business

Vice-Chair Adams noted that the August meeting minutes had called for a decision about Langdon Park, and he thought the box elder underbrush should be removed so that the existing red oak could prosper, adding that it was a small area and not a complex issue. Mr. Rice thought they needed to work on the level of service for green space in the City and that some would have higher levels of service than others. Ms. Stevens noted that Langdon Park was like two different parks because one side was used more than the other. Mr. Rice thought that nothing was begging for additional attention. The committee discussed the box elder underbrush pruning and mowing, and it was suggested that the box elder and the underbrush be removed so that it wouldn't make more work for Public Works.

Mr. Rice abstained from the vote. *Vice-Chair Adams moved that the box elder and the tangled underbrush be removed, and Ms. Stevens seconded. The motion was **approved**, with 3 in favor and Mr. Souto opposed.*

Mr. John Chagnon representing Tuscan Kitchen was present and distributed copies of his plan. Vice-Chair Adams asked whether the Committee needed to review the site and questioned the appropriateness of honey locusts. Mr. Chagnon said there was some work to do and noted that they were requesting a gazebo that would be on partially-owned City property and State property. Mr. Rice thought it was all owned by the City but said he would confirm it. Ms. Stevens asked what would happen to the school bus stop, and Mr. Rice said there was a roundabout but that it was a bus company agreement and not in their purview. Mr. Chagnon said he wanted feedback from the Committee because he needed to move the site plan along before the winter. Vice-Chair Adams said the

Committee would provide feedback after the site walk. Mr. Chagnon emphasized that he needed tree species choices. Vice-Chair Adams noted that Mr. Croteau had discussed pulling back the street trees, and he asked him whether he meant in the direction of the building, and Mr. Croteau agreed. They further discussed the distance between the trees and the building, and Mr. Croteau stated that getting the trees off the road would increase their survivability. Mr. Dupere asked Mr. Chagnon if there were plans to put something on the lawn, but Mr. Chagnon wasn't sure but said he would have his landscape architect meet the Committee on site around 9:30 a.m. on September 14.

In response to a question from Vice-Chair Adams, Mr. Dupere talked about the black gum trees that had cankers and wondered if something was affecting all the black gums and whether they would all be replaced. He thought the nursery should be alerted that they were bringing in trees with problems.

Vice-Chair Adams asked about the fall planting, and Mr. Croteau said he had not planned on one. Vice-Chair Adams asked about the disposition of the four-to-five trees on Rockland above the tennis courts, and Mr. Croteau said they would have to be replanted. Vice-Chair Adams asked about other trees on Merrimack Street and the sycamore on Lincoln and Richards Avenues and whether they would be part of the removal. Mr. Croteau said he would check on it.

Ms. Stevens asked who was taking care of the new trees at the library because they seemed dry, and she noted that there were no bags on them. Mr. Souto responded that a few of the trees had bags.

Vice-Chair Adams stated that the contractor for 50 Willard Avenue wanted to replace the cherry trees. Mr. Rice said the issue was still in a claim against the contractor.

6. Old Business

The Committee discussed the Chinese elm in Market Square and thought it looked stressed. Mr. Croteau brought up the issue of three trees on Congress and Pleasant Streets. Vice-Chair Adams noted that the 15 blue spruces on the corner of Meadow Lane and Rockingham Avenue were dying, and he thought they were on private property. Mr. Dupere noted that he had received a lot of calls about defoliating blue spruces from all over the state. Vice-Chair Adams remarked that the flowers and bushes in front of City Hall looked very nice, and he suggested asking Chairman Loughlin to write a letter of commendation to the Portsmouth Garden Club.

7. Next meeting – Wednesday, October 14, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary