

**MINUTES of the  
City of Portsmouth  
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting  
December 13, 2023**

**Members Present:** Chair Peter Loughlin; Vice-Chair Richard Adams; Director of Public Works Peter Rice; Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley; City Arborist Maxwell Wiater; Members Patricia Bagley, Dennis Souto, Michael Griffin, A. J. Dupere, and Deborah Chag.

**Members Excused:** None.

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Chair Loughlin called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. It was announced that Vice-Chair Adams was retiring.

**1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the November 8, 2023 meeting.**

*The minutes were unanimously **approved** as submitted.*

**2. Tree Removal Requests**

**Rockland Street at Kent St:** 1 Norway maple, poor condition, removal recommended by City. This tree has been in decline for some time. There is a large basal wound with decaying wood, as well as instances of holes, sloughing bark, and limb dieback.

Chair Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Rockland Street at Sherburne Ave:** 1 white ash, fair condition, removal recommended by City. This tree has recently suffered a large limb tear out that has created a large wound.

Chair Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Chag moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. The motion passed unanimously.*

**88 Lincoln Ave:** 1 Silver maple, fair condition. Recent storm damage has prompted this removal request. This large tree has some structural issues, such as fruiting bodies from a burl and large areas of included bark. The presence of water sprouts suggests stress, and there is a history of root damage as well as reduction pruning. *Revisiting the decision to remove this tree from the October 2023 meeting.*

Mr. Wiater said the tree had large leaders coming off the tree's central stem. He said things could be done, like retrenchment pruning, and it was further discussed. The property owner Alex Greiner was present and asked that the tree be removed for safety and financial reasons. Chair Loughlin asked if the limb of the tree that went toward the

homeowner's house could be removed. Mr. Wiater said it wouldn't completely alleviate the issue of other parts of the tree falling.

Chair Loughlin asked for a motion. *Ms. Kelley moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Rice.*

Ms. Kelley said the tree had continuous issues, a large branch broke off close to the homeowner's house, and winter weather was coming, so it could be a perfect storm if the tree wasn't removed.

*The motion passed unanimously.*

- 3. Arbor Day 2024** – Arborist Max Wiater's proposal that the City plant seedling from the Moffatt-Ladd House/Whipple chestnut tree and invite the Portsmouth Historic Society to discuss the history and people behind the tree. They will likely require the creation of protective box/structures to keep the seedlings sheltered from mechanical damage.

Mr. Wiater said he wanted to acquire and plant four chestnut tree seedlings on City property and invite members from the Portsmouth Historic Society to discuss the chestnut tree's historic implications. The committee thought it was a great idea.

- 4. Tree Purchase Order** – Discussion regarding the trees that the City is purchasing for planting next spring.

Mr. Wiater said there were 150 trees ready to plant in the spring. He noted that he also had records of tree species since 2015 that had not been planted, including a Hardy rubber-tree. It was further discussed. Mr. Wiater said he'd like to plant a few of the trees in a park instead of just in the right-of-way strips. He said the species were mostly from southern states but also did well in the cold.

- 5. Update of Tree Planting for the City's 400<sup>th</sup> and 401<sup>st</sup>**

Mr. Wiater said he wanted to do another tree giveaway at the Sustainability Fair around Earth Day in mid-April. He said there were several hardwood trees still available from the State nursery that were easy to transplant and inexpensive. He suggested giving 50 of them away at the fair and demonstrating to people how to plant them.

Ms. Chag asked about tree planting in lower income neighborhoods. Mr. Wiater said the City planned to plant trees in the Pease Development area but that it would be difficult because there was a lot of impervious material as well as the runway and so on. He said trees also could not be planted on Islington Street or certain sections of State Street. Ms. Chag suggested planting trees in some of Craig Welch's projects. Mr. Rice said he had spoken to Mr. Welch and that the City also had the grant program and could look at requests for tree planting that would not be on public property.

## 6. Old Business

- **Update on Hall Cemetery:** Mr. Wiater said the final phase with Seaside Tree Solutions would be the first week of January and removals of tagged trees would be done along South Street and the debris would be chipped on site.
- Vice-Chair Adams asked about the beech tree near the old high school, between the Keefe House and the Discover Portsmouth building. Mr. Rice said the tree had been looked at. He said the wall would be replaced for handicap access and a small park would be made. Mr. Wiater said the tree had a dead leader and there was some activity on the back side of that stem but it was also cabled to the other half of the tree. He said the building's contractor maintained the tree and if the contractor said the cable should not support a side of the tree, the City would consider removing the failing side of the tree.
- Ms. Bagley asked if there was new information on beech leaf disease. Mr. Dupere said different chemicals were being tried to control the disease and a policy was being developed for hikers because they could drag the pest with them. It was further discussed.

## 7. New Business

Chair Loughlin said it was Vice-Chair Adams's last meeting and that the committee knew the passion and wisdom Mr. Adams brought to every meeting and how he represented the civility of the meetings. Mr. Adams said it had been a pleasure serving on the committee.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, January 10, 2024

The meeting **adjourned** at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann Breault  
Trees and Greenery Committee Recording Secretary