

**MINUTES of the
City of Portsmouth
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
November 13, 2024**

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

Members Excused: Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley

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

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the October 9 Meeting

*The October 9 minutes were **approved** as amended. (Mr. Griffin voted in opposition to recommending a tree removal on 47 Elwyn Avenue, so the vote to recommend the tree's removal was 5-1 instead of unanimous).*

2. Tree Removal Requests

- **826 South St:** 1 red oak, poor condition, City request, removal recommended by City. This tree has a significant lean over the road, and a recent sidewalk installation has likely damaged roots. The canopy is in decline overall and there are shoots throughout, suggesting stress. My fear is the tree will fail due to its excessive lean and poor vigor.

Mr. Wiater said he had been watching the oak decline over the past years after the sidewalk was installed, but it was continuing to lean beyond what it did before and was starting to decline from the top. He recommended removing it before a significant weather event occurs, such as the storm from this past April, and he also noted that the road was well traveled.

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

- **151 Clinton St (on Stark St):** 1 cherry, fair condition, resident request, removal recommended by City. This tree has declined recently due to abnormal weather in the spring. Structural issues such as cavities and rot near attachments points of major limbs exist.

Mr. Wiater said it was a resident request. He said the cherry tree had some cavities with decay at some major union points. He said it had declined and that he was looking at a 60 percent return foliage from what he assumed was closer to 100 percent following the inclement weather. He said he had doubts as to whether the tree would hold out,

especially with the loss of foliage and other aspects. He said he wouldn't want to park his car under that tree. He said the tree could be pruned but felt that it would be best to remove it at this point.

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

- **10 McClintock Ave** (on Woodworth Ave): 1 ash, poor condition, resident request, removal recommended by City. The tree is showing signs of EAB. I've observed bark blanding and exit holes in the upper crown.

Mr. Wiater said it was a resident request. He said he saw some EAB exit holes in the uppermost part of the canopy. He said it was just another declining ash. He noted that a nearby tree was removed. Mr. Griffin asked if the three ash trees further up the street were on private property. Mr. Wiater said he wasn't sure but would check.

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

- **21 Pleasant St**: 2 ash trees, poor condition, removal recommended by City. Both trees are showing signs of EAB. I've observed bark blanding, exit holes, and significant dieback.

Mr. Wiater said he drove by and noticed that the removal tags were removed, which was the cause of some confusion among committee members. Additionally, a third tree was removed recently due to a box truck damaging the tree. He said of the two remaining trees, the one on the right looked better but there were exit holes from EAB in the upper part of the crown. Chair Loughlin recommended removing the worse of the two ash trees.

Chair Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the middle ash tree on the left as someone faces the bank entrance. Ms. Chag seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Wiater said he would find the best path forward for replanting at the site. Mr. Rice recommended exploring the use of silva cells. He said the Market Square Master Plan would have an element of tree plantings and he thought it was appropriate for the Tree Committee to review those plans and potentially support the expenditures to create the silva cell areas. Vice-Chair Bagley asked if the reason the tree in front of the former Starbucks was on hold was due to future work on the square. Mr. Rice said the whole terraced area would most likely be reworked and recommended that the tree remain on hold. He said he would talk to the Planning Department's Director Peter Britz about how the Tree Committee could interact with that effort.

- **2 Market Square** (on Pleasant St): 2 Norway maples, poor condition, removal recommended by City. These trees are in various states of decline. Both have declined significantly in the central portion of the crown.

Mr. Wiater said small branches were detaching from the two small maples and could become a hazard. Mr. Dupere said the trees had been there since the 1970s and had had several issues. It was further discussed.

Chair Loughlin asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the two maples, seconded by Mr. Dupere. The motion passed unanimously.*

3. Update on City's Ongoing Tree Maintenance and Planting Plans

Mr. Wiater showed the committee the final door hang and said there were 750 of them ready to go. He said the door hangs would make the tree planting and maintenance process more streamlined by providing more information to the public. He said he next wanted to tackle the issue of mulch volcanoes and would have it ready by the following summer. He said there were still adjustments being made to the purchased tree list but that it was basically firm. Ms. Chag asked about conifers. Mr. Wiater said he could get five conifers from a local nursery and planting would follow the bare root planting season. It was further discussed.

4. Discussion of Heat Island Study

Mr. Wiater reviewed the study and said the City could get more trees in certain locations and allow them to provide as many benefits as possible by placing structures underground and allowing the trees to achieve some maturity. Mr. Dupere suggested the 'iTree MyTree' app, a suite of tree imagery software that plots a tree at someone's house and allows the image to be moved around the yard. It was further discussed.

Ms. Chag asked about green space in the Foundry Garage area. Mr. Rice said it was in the ordinance as to how much coverage would be allowed in an urban core. He suggested that Ms. Chag speak to Planning Manager Peter Stith of the Planning Department. He said the City was cognizant about ensuring that developers put trees in but that the trees were typically on the sidewalks. Chair Loughlin said that was normally done at site reviews. Ms. Chag said the City was doing a good job in connecting walkability from the Foundry Parking Garage into the downtown area. It was further discussed.

5. Old Business

Mr. Griffin and Ms. Chag suggested placing a few trees in front of the new development on Woodbury Avenue. Mr. Wiater agreed that there could be more trees on that corner because there was a lot of space. Spruce and tulip trees were discussed.

6. New Business

Mr. Wiater said he had been working with the City's GIS specialist about having access to the tree inventory, and he explained how it could be done. He said the map could be on the Trees & Public Greenery Committee's website page. He said he would find out the location of another GIS map for property boundaries in Portsmouth.

Mr. Dupere said he had some trees in wire cages in the City's arboretum that were established in the early 1980s and that he wanted to air spade one of the trees to see how much damage the cage had done to it. It was further discussed.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 11, 2024

The meeting **adjourned** at 8:52 a.m.

Submitted,

Joann Breault
Trees and Greenery Committee Minutes Taker