

**MINUTES of the  
City of Portsmouth  
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting  
April 13, 2022**

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

**Members Excused:** Chairman Peter Loughlin, Deborah Chag

**Also Present:** Eversource Rep Scott Richardson, City Project Manager Dave DesFosses

---

Chairman Loughlin was excused and Vice-Chair Adams was Acting Chair.

**1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the March 9, 2022 Meeting**

The minutes were **approved** as presented.

**2. Tree Removal Requests**

- **Harvard St Extension – 1 black birch, 3 red maples – Eversource request**

Mr. Baxter said the four trees were dead or just hanging by a thread.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto recommended removing the four trees, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

- **22 Greenleaf Ave - 2 red maples – Eversource request**

Mr. Baxter said the two trees were leaning over a wire. He noted that there were a few other trees that should be removed in the future and that a different tree species should be planted. Mr. Souto asked if the black cherry would be removed, and Eversource representative Scott Richardson said he would look at the tree.

Acting Chair Adams asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto recommended removing the two maples, seconded by Ms. Bagley. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

**3. Presentation by City Project Manager Dave DesFosses discussing:**

- **Bridge St Pocket Park**
- **Goodwin Park**
- **Pannaway Manor Sidewalk Improvement Tree Impacts**

- **Maple Haven Sidewalk Improvement Tree Impacts**

Mr. DesFosses was present with his team to discuss the projects. Relating to Bridge Street, he said they planned to put a planting bed along Bridge Street so that the parking lot is screened on all four sides. In order to do that, he said they would eliminate the interior concrete sidewalk. He said Public Works would plant the strip along Bridge Street and that Mr. Baxter would select the species. He noted that one small tree would be relocated. He said the upper end of Bridge Street would be designed as part of the Islington Street project and that his team removed the shrubbery but didn't plan on doing anything further because the project landscape architect would design it. Acting Chair Adams asked if the hawthorns along Maplewood Avenue would be removed. Mr. Baxter said he didn't believe so and that the small tree being removed was a crab apple. Ms. Bagley asked Mr. DesFosses if he would select the trees for the Hanover Street end of the lot, and Mr. DesFosses said he would leave the decision for the species selection up to Mr. Baxter. Mr. Rice said there was no rush because the parking lot had to be made functional first.

Mr. DesFosses said Goodwin Park was getting a new entrance and that he would return at the May meeting to give a full report on the chosen tree species. He said the brick walls would be rehabilitated and the new entrances would be changed to line up with the crosswalk so that people could enter the park directly as they crossed the street and so that it would also comply with ADA standards. He said the brick surrounds would be removed in some spots, sidewalks would be realigned, some bollard lights would be added along the main entrance, and the aluminum fence would be either rebuilt or replaced. Mr. Rice said the park was in need of attention and the intent was to make the streetscape more coherent and ADA compliant.

Mr. DesFosses discussed the sidewalk projects for Pannaway Manor and Maple Haven. He said a Pannaway Manor neighborhood meeting was held and that the residents asked for sidewalks about 6-7 years ago, so they were getting frustrated. He said that Pannaway now has sidewalks on both sides of the street but they are three feet wide and marginally usable due to tree roots heaving up the pavement. He said they looked at narrowing the road to put the sidewalk over the paved surface but the road wasn't wide enough, so the only place for the sidewalk is the current location. He said they decided that the best thing to do to limit the amount of trees that would be impacted was to replace the sidewalk on one side of the street only and to have the sidewalk on the other side removed permanently. He said there were fewer trees proposed for removal on the inner side of the street. He said the final count was 28 trees that needed to be removed to put in the sidewalk. He said 24 large trees and several small ones would remain on that side of the street, so half the trees on the outer loop of the street will be removed for the sidewalk project and the inner loop will have no trees removed. He noted that all the trees were about the same age and were mostly lindens. He said the residents were in favor of the proposals and that he would ask the committee for permission to remove those trees at the May meeting. Acting Chair Adams asked if the residents were aware of how many trees would be removed. He said the residents are generally supportive but may not fully grasp the scope of the removals. Mr. Rice said the intent was to minimize the amount of trees to be removed, and it was further discussed.

Mr. DesFosses said Maple Haven had the same sidewalk setup as Pannaway Manor and there was some controversy among the residents as to what side of the street the sidewalk should go

on, so it was still in the design process. He noted that the trees were mostly maples and lindens. Mr. Adams asked if the lindens had a tendency to have roots come up near the surface. Mr. Baxter said he wasn't aware of it, and it was further discussed.

#### **4. Congratulations to the City Tree Crew and DPWH on earning the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Growth Award**

Mr. Baxter said there were two categories this year, the weekly safety training program for crew members and continuing education for crew members. He said a third category was young tree training, which including not only planting young trees but also maintaining them for five years so that they can likely live for many years. He said Mr. Rice was instrumental in ensuring that every crew member went to tree seminars and events. He noted that 70 trees had already been planted for the year and that they hoped to plant the rest by the end of the week, for a total of 100 trees. He said a few extra trees would be given to some area schools. Mr. Rice said he appreciated Mr. Baxter's acknowledgement of his effort but that it was really the effort of the committee and the City Council that continued to support the important investment in the city for the last 20 years. He said Mr. Baxter and his staff were outstanding and that Portsmouth was probably one of the best cities in the nation for planting and maintaining trees. Acting Chair Adams wryly noted that it wasn't that many years ago that Portsmouth managed to do their planting at the peak of the drought season. Mr. Baxter said timing was key.

#### **5. Update from City Arborist Chuck Baxter**

Mr. Baxter said all the red pines on Peirce Island were removed due to infestation and that 15-16 trees had been replanted, with more trees to be planted in the future. He said they were all different species and large trees due to the fact that there were no overhead utilities. He said they planned to have Arbor Day on Peirce Island. Mr. Griffin asked if the Peirce Island Committee had any input as to tree species. Mr. Baxter said there were lots of opinions but that he would work with them on ideas. Mr. Rice noted that the Peirce Island Committee's involvement in operations was limited. Mr. Baxter said there were four bald cypress trees in the wet area that wouldn't survive, so he wanted to plant ball and burlap trees there. He noted that 96 out of 100 trees that were planted bare root did wonderfully and that only a certain species (the bald cypress) didn't. It was further discussed. Mr. Baxter said he would send out an email with the finalized sites and species at the end of the week.

#### **6. Tree Planting for the City's 400<sup>th</sup>**

Mr. Rice said the Rotary Club would be working with Mr. Dupere and that an outreach effort would be done. He said it would be word-of-mouth mostly, and he suggested that committee members reach out to people who had good spots for trees on their properties. He said the city was excited to celebrate their 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to continue the committee's work. An Eversource representative who was present said Eversource would donate ten trees in celebration of either Arbor Day or the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Acting Chair Adams said the committee used to be involved in tree species and site selection years ago and asked if there were any committee members who would now like to weigh in, noting that it would be a good way of learning more about trees. Mr. Baxter said he a good way of doing that would be to share the availability order form from the nursery around the holidays, and everyone could review the form and then discuss the species and other things they wanted or didn't want. Mr. Rice asked if it was possible to put together the types of trees that were planted over the last five years so that if everyone wanted the same species, they would know there was already a bunch of them. Mr. Baxter said it could be an annual thing by which he would get the form, send it out to the committee members, and then they would all review the species. He said Portsmouth had to battle bigger cities for particular tree species, e.g. Cambridge, MA got 700 trees twice a year. Mr. Rice asked whether the trees could be pre-ordered. Mr. Baxter said that was also a battle because other cities wanted that as well, but he thought it could be done. He discussed the wholesale nurseries that he usually works with and noted that Portsmouth's success rate with tree species was good, noting that only four trees didn't make it last year.

## **7. Old Business**

Eversource representative Scott Richardson said Eversource potentially wanted to remove a tree from the parking lot at the corner of Fleet and State Streets but was concerned that there may be a statute or regulation as to the amount of shade cover was required. Mr. Rice said he'd have to review it with the Planning Department to see if the site development plan had requirements associated with that, but he wasn't aware of any restrictions. He noted that the condominiums across the street from the parking lot had some planting requirements, though. Mr. Dupere said the planting requirements didn't carry forward into perpetuity, and it was further discussed. Mr. Rice said he would check and get back to Mr. Richardson.

Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Richardson if he found out who owned the small cemetery on Echo Avenue. Mr. Richardson said he heard from the owner, who said the cherry tree could be cut down. It was asked if the cemetery was mowed, and Mr. Baxter said it was mowed sporadically.

## **8. New Business**

There was no new business.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, May 11, 2022

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault

Trees and Public Greenery Committee Recording Secretary