MINUTES of the
City of Portsmouth
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
September 14, 2022

Members Present: Chairman Peter Loughlin; Vice-Chair Richard Adams; Peter Rice, Director of Public Works; Members Michael Griffin, Dennis Souto, Patricia Bagley, Deborah Chag (via Zoom); Arborist Foreman Chuck Baxter, and Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley (via Zoom)

Members Excused: A. J. Dupere

Also Present: Eversource Representative Scott Richardson, Landscape Architect Terrence Parker, Joe Coronati of Jones and Beach Engineers

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Chairman Loughlin called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the July and August 2022 Meetings

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

Note: The committee first addressed Item 77 Meredith Way.

Tree Removal Requests

- **Bottom of McGee Dr. next to 790 McGee Dr. - 1 white pine, Eversource request**

Eversource representative Scott Richardson said there were several issues with trees on McGee Drive blowing over and taking out power lines and that five trees were previously removed. He said the white pine had quite a lean to it and was red-flagged, given its location and stature.

Mr. Souto moved to **recommend removal** of the tree, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Across from 41 Topaz Place- 1 willow, Eversource request**

Mr. Richardson said the willow was not an imminent threat but was more of a cosmetic issue. He said it was trimmed last spring but was growing rapidly toward the power lines again.

Ryan Crest of Edmund Avenue said the beautiful tree helped mitigate the water from the swamp. He said he was against the tree being removed and thought it could continue to be pruned.

Tracy George of 41 Topaz Place said the tree was well loved in the neighborhood and performed several functional aspects, including being a visual barrier to the Route 95 traffic and helping

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with noise mitigation. She said she was also concerned about the retention pond in front of them. She asked that the tree continue to be pruned.

Mr. Baxter asked if it would take significant pruning to get proper clearance. Mr. Richardson said the clearance was between 3-4 feet and it wasn't a priority issue, so the tree was maintainable. Vice-Chair Adams said he concurred with what the two residents said. He said the tree had no known defects, and he asked where the process would stop if every healthy tree in the city that posed a potential hazard to power lines were removed

Vice-Chair Adams moved to **not recommend removal** of the tree, seconded by Mr. Griffin.

Mr. Rice said he had no problem leaving the tree, especially due to the functions it provides but didn't know if additional willows would be added to that area because he had seen a lot of them drop limbs. Mr. Baxter said it was appropriate to prune the tree and leave it for now but thought it was the wrong species for the site.

The motion passed by a vote of 8 to 1, with Mr. Rice voting in opposition.

- **Holiday Drive park area next to skate park- 1 black locust, Eversource request**

Mr. Richardson said it was mostly a cosmetic issue because the tree could be trimmed, but it leaned out at the top.

Mr. Griffin moved to **recommend removal** of the tree, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion passed unanimously.

- **At the bottom of Meredith Way- 6 Norway maple, 5 black cherry, 1 boxelder – Resident request as part of home development**

See Item 3 on page 3.

- **367 Richards Ave- 1 Norway maple, DPW request**

Mr. Baxter said the tree was pruned multiple times but had a massive amount of decay and would soon fail.

Mr. Souto moved to **recommend removal** of the tree, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Heritage Ave. in the island across from #225 - One Cluster of gray birch, 3 eastern red cedars**

Joe Coronati of Jones and Beach Engineers representing the property owner was present. He said the center island restricted truck traffic from entering and exiting the area, which he further explained. He said the owner was willing to donate $5,000 toward future tree planting to offset

the loss of the trees. Chairman Loughlin said he was contacted by the owner's representatives and that they wanted to donate as compensation; he said he checked with Mr. Baxter, who said it would cost about $1,000 per tree. Mr. Griffin asked if a traffic survey was done as to the volume of trucks. Mr. Coronati said there wasn't a survey done but there were a large number of trucks parked there currently. Mr. Rice said he didn't normally like removing streetscape trees for applications, but for this case he'd allow it to happen so that the business could function.

Mr. Rice moved to **recommend removal** of the trees with the $5,000 stipulated on that offer, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Terrence Parker with Terra Firma Land Architects presenting on the landscape plan for the future development of 88 Maplewood Avenue.

Mr. Parker distributed a handout to the committee and reviewed the landscape plan. He said there would be six street trees on Deer Street, three along Maplewood Avenue, and a series of trees in a green strip at the back of the building that was considered a pocket park. He said the park would have more human amenities but wasn't sure what they would be. He said there would be a handicap access that would go into the parking lot. He discussed the tree grate, noting that it was 50 feet long and four feet wide. He said there would be some vertical tree guards and all the trees would provide wildlife habitat food service.

Mr. Griffin asked if there would be adequate sun exposure on the northern sides. Mr. Parker agreed. He said a fence would separate the railroad and the pocket park. Mr. Rice said the sidewalk would be on the other side of the tracks and would go along the edge. Mr. Parker said there could be a stipulation that the property owner would maintain the sidewalk but it was a City sidewalk. He said there would be no silva cells, just contiguous soil. He said the wayfinding site would be moved. Ms. Bagley asked if the site was originally a DSA property, and Mr. Parker agreed. The grate and the tree species were further discussed. He said each cluster of trees was a different species – three maples, six carpinus, and eight oaks in the back – and had similar profiles in length and width.

Mr. Rice moved to **recommend approval**, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Randi and Jeff Collins of 77 Meredith Way presenting about their need to remove the tree growth at the end of Meredith Way to extend the road and build their house.

Mr. Baxter explained that a new home was being built and that the road would be extended and that it made sense to remove the trees. He said shade trees would be planted in the future. The residents Randi and Jeff Collins stated that the Planning Board and TAC were also reviewing it.

Mr. Griffin moved to **recommend removal**, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Update from City Arborist Chuck Baxter

Mr. Baxter said it was his last meeting because he was resigning. He thanked the committee and said he appreciated everything they had done.

5. Tree Planting for the City's 400th Anniversary.

Mr. Baxter said the City would plant 200 trees in-house and the other 200 would be planted at residents' homes. Mr. Rice said it would probably be done the first weekend in April and that the 400th Anniversary Committee would set the date. He said there would be a planting video online. Mr. Baxter said the five species chosen would include swamp white oak, red maple, a bald cypress, and two flowering species. Mr. Rice said Mr. Dupere was in charge of it and would report back to the committee.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

Chairman Loughlin presented Mr. Baxter with a plaque and card from the committee and thanked him for everything he had done for the committee during the past several years. Mr. Rice said Mr. Baxter had been incredible to work with and would be missed, but that he created a great foundation for others to follow.

Mr. Griffin asked about the public hearing regarding sidewalks at Pannaway Manor that was soon to take place. Mr. Rice said it was more of a public information meeting and that the committee would discuss the original design intent and point out that the trees were better off being removed.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 12, 2022

The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Recording Secretary