

**Minutes of the
City of Portsmouth's
Trees and Public Greenery Committee Meeting
November 12, 2025**

Members Present: Chair Patricia Bagley; Vice-Chair Michael Griffin; Director of Public Works Peter Rice; Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley-Adams; (via Zoom); City Tree Supervisor/Arborist Maxwell Wiater; Members A. J. Dupere, Dennis Souto, Deborah Chag, Scott McDermott and Ian Hanley (via Zoom)

Members Excused: None.

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

1. Acceptance of the October 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

*Ms. Chag moved to **approve** the minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Rice. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

2. Tree Removal Requests

Note: the tree removal requests were not addressed in order.

- **Congress St at Fleet St:** 1 hedge maple, good condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. This tree is directly on top of a utility that requires updating.

City of Portsmouth Construction Project Manager Dave Desfosses was present and said the sewer that serves that side of the street drained downhill toward Fleet St and was in need of repair. He said the sewer was located in the brick behind the tree and that the size of the machine that would replace the sewer would necessitate removing the tree planter. He noted that the entire sidewalk would be reconstructed as part of Phase 2 of the Vaughan Mall project. He said a smaller species replacement tree could be planted after the reconstruction in about 16 months. It was further discussed.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto recommended removing the tree, seconded by Vice-Chair Griffin. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

- **501 Broad St:** 1 Norway maple, fair condition, removal requested by resident. Dead branches fell from this tree and struck a parked car. The tree was exhibiting signs of drought stress and fungal infection. [Timestamp 10:21]

The property owner Moira Maloney was present and said the tree was stressed and had a lot of dead branches, several of which had fallen, and she was worried that the branches would hit a person or vehicles. She said a branch hit her car and caused a lot of damage.

She noted that the tree was near the driveway and the sidewalk. Mr. Wiater said he preferred to prune the tree and wait until spring to see whether it should be removed. Ms. Maloney said the tree was leaning significantly toward her house, so Mr. Wiater said he could prune the tree around the middle of December. Chair Bagley asked how much of the tree would be left after heavy pruning. Mr. Dupere said at least 30 percent of the tree would have to be removed. Mr. Rice confirmed that the tree was posted for removal. Mr. Wiater said a lot of nearby trees were in the same condition. It was further discussed.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto recommended removing the tree, seconded by Ms. Chag. The motion **passed** by a vote of 7-2, with Vice-Chair Griffin and Mr. McDermott voting in opposition.*

- **46 McNabb Ct:** 1 ash, poor/dead condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City. This is located behind 419 South St on City property and is almost entirely dead due to EAB. [Timestamp 22:15]

The property owner Ben Otis was present and said the tree was dropping quite a few limbs. He noted that all the utilities went to the back lot on South Street and that there was also a Norway tree to the left of the ash. Mr. Wiater said the ash had EAB and was 95 percent dead. He said a company he contacted would remove the tree with a crane. He said he would further research the Norway tree to see what its condition is.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice recommended removal of the ash, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

- **67 Marston Ave:** 1 ash, poor condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. The tree has been declining due to EAB. [Timestamp 32:32]

There were no questions from the committee.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Ms. Chag recommended removal of the tree, seconded by Mr. Rice. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

- **86 Porpoise Way:** 1 pear, poor condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City. Fungal issues are defoliating the tree, and it appears stressed from the drought. [Timestamp 26:46]

Lynne Langley of 84 Porpoise Way was present. She said she loved the tree but it had problems. Mr. Wiater said pear trees normally had problems like fungal infections, and he recommended removing the tree and replacing it with something else. He said he spoke to Ian Hanley, who said the tree hadn't looked vigorous for the past few years.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. McDermott recommended removal and replacement of the tree, seconded by Mr. Souto. The motion **passed** by a vote of 7-1, with Vice-Chair Griffin voting in opposition and Mr. Hanley abstaining.*

- **10 Crescent Way** (near pump station): 1 red maple, good condition, removal requested and recommended by the City. Utility infrastructure improvement requires the removal of this tree. [Timestamp 5:05]

Dave Desfosses was present and clarified that Eversource recommended the tree's removal. Mr. Wiater said a utility upgrade was required for the house and the pump station and the solution was to continue to run the poles and lines from the right-hand side. He said burying the lines would destroy the tree's root system, and coming at the tree from another angle would still necessitate infrastructure to the pump station, so the tree would be impacted in any case. He recommended removing it and continuing the utility lines. He said nearby trees would need to be pruned but not removed.

Lauren Wolf of Atlantic Heights was present and said it was a beautiful tree and that she wanted clarification on its condition and agreed that it should be removed.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Souto recommended removal of the tree, seconded by Vice-Chair Griffin. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

- **4 Blue Heron Dr:** 1 silver maple, poor condition, removal requested by resident, removal recommended by the City. This multi-stem tree has significant rot and decay and is in a state of decline. [Timestamp 31:13]

Mr. Wiater said the tree was in decline and that he recommended removal.

Chair Bagley asked for a motion. *Mr. Rice moved to recommend removal of the tree, seconded by Ms. Chag. The motion **passed** unanimously, 9-0.*

3. Old Business

Review of Eric Eby's Comments on 1126 South St Line of Sight Issue [Timestamp 33:12]

Mr. Wiater said Mr. Eby thought the main problem was the fence that dominated the tree. The resident Bob Kalinowski was present and agreed if the fence was not present the tree would not be an issue. Mr. Wiater said he did not recommend removing the tree because it was a healthy one. Mr. Rice said it was a Parking and Traffic Safety Committee issue.

4. New Business

Discussion Regarding the Current State of the Cate St Greenway [Timestamp 36:25]

Deputy City Attorney Trevor McCourt was present. Mr. Wiater said that he and Chair Bagley received correspondence from a resident of the Cate Street Condos, who was concerned about the state of the Cate Street Greenway, and that he thought it was under the City's purview. Mr. Rice disagreed. Attorney McCourt explained the background and said the zoning ordinance had a provision by which, in certain districts of the City,

developers could take advantage of incentives to build taller or denser buildings. He said West End Yards did that by offering workforce housing and community space. He said community space was normally done by an easement to the City that stated that the property owner would be responsible for maintaining it. In this particular case, he said there was no road previously, so part of the transaction was that the developer had to give Hodgson Way and all of that property in fee to the City, which created confusion. He said the owner of the apartment complex entered into a landscape agreement for the whole greenway. He said the greenway had three sections and that Section C was the issue but it was not mentioned in the license agreement as being the developer's responsibility, so the developer did not think he was responsible for the maintenance. Attorney McCourt said he had been working with the developer's counsel and thought it was just an oversight, and he was also working with the developer to get it resolved.

Vice-Chair Griffin asked if the soil conditions were the demise of all the trees. Mr. Wiater said he thought the lack of regular maintenance likely caused the demise of the trees. He said they were trying to come up with something to do for the site but that the site would not likely be a City-managed space and that only the sidewalk would be maintained by the City. Mr. Rice said Mr. Perkins of West End Yards did not agree with the City's interpretation but Mr. Rice thought it would be worked out. Attorney McCourt said he would ask Mr. Perkins to review the meeting video. Vice-Chair Griffin asked if there were any trees in that zone that had done okay. Mr. Wiater said the river birches and oaks were doing well but generally everything along that walkway were not perfect examples of a transplanted tree and that it came down to the long-term overall care. He said the trees were planted in 2022 but that he had not seen them being watered much.

Other Topics of Discussion [Timestamp 45:36]

- Ms. Chag said she was interested in being a contact person for the Miyawaki Project. Mr. Wiater said he was in contact with people at the Portsmouth Middle School and would give her an update. Mr. McDermott said he could contribute some of his time.
- Mr. Souto said he would be giving a talk to the Senior Center about trees on December 9 and said Mr. Dupere would give him a few samples that he could show to the group and demonstrate how trees grow, what root systems looked like, etc.
- Ms. Chag asked about the Adopt-a-Spot on Crescent Way. Mr. Wiater said the intent was to put in a smaller tree. Ms. Chag suggested that the person who owned the spot be notified, and Mr. Wiater said he could see to it.
- Chair Bagley asked about the signage for the Portsmouth 400th trees. Mr. Souto asked how the trees would be documented and whether photos would be taken of them. Mr. Wiater said it was a good idea. Mr. Dupere offered to do a video on basic pruning, noting that the spring would be a good time to prune. It was further discussed. Mr. Wiater said the 200 City-planted trees for the Portsmouth 400th could

be documented easily because they were already inventoried, but documenting the other 200 trees that were given to citizens would take a lot of time.

- The Portsmouth animal pee posts were discussed. Mr. Wiater said they were not installed yet and that he was drafting the signage for them.
- Vice-Chair Griffin said Mr. Wiater's crew did a great job pruning the tree on the corner of Kearsarge Way.

5. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 10, 2025

The meeting **adjourned** at 8:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault

Trees and Greenery Committee Meeting Minutes Taker