

Portsmouth Shade Tree Commission

Policies and Procedures

I. Tree maintenance

A. Public Inquiries - The public is encouraged to inquire about the condition of a tree by calling a member of the Tree Commission or preferably the Public Service Director. In some cases, the City's Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Urban Forester Consultant may be asked to inspect and provide a written evaluation of a tree. Occasionally, the Tree Commission as a whole will be asked to vote on a recommended action. Residents will be contacted about decisions.

B. Permit Procedure - A resident or contractor requesting to remove or prune a city tree at personal expense must fill out a permit application (Appendix A). The Public Service Director (or Tree Commission chair or other assigned TC member) will check the tree and contact the resident for additional details if needed. The Tree Commission will provide recommendations on the application form. The application is then forwarded to the Director of Public Service for his decision. It is the responsibility of the resident to obtain a completed, approved permit before proceeding with the requested action.

C. Prioritization of Tree Maintenance - Trees requiring pruning or removal are given a priority ranking as follows:

*E (**Emergency**). Condition of tree indicates imminent hazard and remedial action should be taken at once.*

*P-1 (**Priority-1**). Indicates tree should go on the next contract.*

*P-2 (**Priority-2**). Future action may be required. Condition of P-2 trees is currently unclear and the tree will be reevaluated before being placed on the next contract. In some cases, trees that recover may be removed from the list.*

*P-3 (**Priority-3**). No action required. A tree about which a resident has made repeated inquiries, but for which the tree's condition does not warrant action. As a courtesy to the resident, a P-3 tree will be reevaluated once each year or as called for by the particular situation.*

*P-4 (**Priority-4**) No action appropriate. A tree for which a resident has recently requested maintenance that is not appropriate to a sound urban tree program. Typically, a P-4 tree might be one for which extensive pruning or removal has been requested by the resident for personal reasons (e.g., tree removal so that flowers may be planted.)*

D. Maintenance work - Maintenance of city trees is performed by city crews or by a contracted pruning company. Contracts for tree pruning and removal may be awarded as necessary to a licensed tree pruner. The list of current priority trees is maintained by the Service Director.

E. Licensing of Tree Maintenance Contractors - An application (Appendix B) to be filled out by a contractor and is available at the Service Department. Proof of insurance, workers compensation, etc. must be provided to the Director of Public Service. Before making a recommendation on the application, the Tree Commission may request an on-site inspection of recent pruning's by the applicant to ascertain whether the work has been conducive to long-term health of the tree and appropriate for the location and tree.

II. Planting Program

A. Goals – The depletion of certain species of trees along Portsmouth's streets and in the parks highlights the importance of a diversified urban forest. For this reason, the Tree Commission endeavors to build and maintain a highly diversified species within the Portsmouth urban forest. Through its tree planting program, the Tree Commission endeavors to apply the "10-20-30" rule. This rule states that:

1. No more than 10% of the urban forest should be the same species,
2. No more than 20% of the urban forest should be the same genus, and
3. A single family should comprise no more than 30% of the urban forest.

In general, the Tree Commission places a priority on the planting of native species where suitable and appropriate.

B. Planting Schedule - The Tree Commission contracts for planting of City trees in late fall (November). Occasionally, planting will also occur in the spring. Trees are often planted to mark special occasions, such as Arbor Day (in Portsmouth, Arbor Day is generally celebrated in April). Planting at other times of the year is not recommended since hot, dry weather can severely stress newly transplanted trees.

C. Tree Planting Requests - Residents and property owners may request to plant a tree in a lawn strip or park by completing a planting permit (Appendix A) or by contacting a member of the Tree Commission. Species selection and site selection must meet Tree Commission guidelines.

III. Commission Operation

A. Committee Assignments - During the January meeting, Tree Commission members will be asked to serve on and/or as Chair or Secretary.

B. Election of Chair - During the December meeting, nominations will be entertained for a member to serve as Chair of the Tree Commission for the following year. The Tree Commission will vote for the Chair in the January meeting.

C. Tree Commission Membership - The Tree Commission is a very active City Commission that often seeks new members. Membership on the Commission incurs certain responsibilities that prospective new members should consider before they seek appointment. These responsibilities include:

- Ability to attend regular meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 12:00 p.m.
- Time and willingness to interact with city residents to discuss tree planting, tree maintenance and other tree-related issues.
- Time and willingness to help stake planting sites in the fall and inspect planted trees in the Spring.
- Willingness to be alert to problems with city trees and to report problem trees at monthly Tree Commission meetings.
- Willingness to help when possible with "ceremonial" tree events like the annual Arbor Day planting.

D. Changes to Tree Commission Documents - Changes to the Tree Commission 'Rules and Regulations' and 'Policies and Procedures' require a majority vote of the current Tree Commission membership. The Chair will vote in case of a tie.

IV. Tree Inventory

The Tree Commission is in the process of compiling a computerized inventory of city trees, starting with the Parks.

V. Certified Green Award

Periodically the Tree Commission recognizes exceptional use of trees in landscaping of commercial property with the "Certified Green" award. The award includes a framed certificate and notification of local newspapers. The Tree Commission welcomes nominations for this award.