

Cambridge Committee on Public Planting  
15 January 2019

Present:

Chantal Eide, Joan Krizack, Cynthia Smith, Nancy Phillips, David Lefcourt, Andrew Putnam, Seanna Berry, Florrie Wescoat, Sophia Emperador, Nancy Jordalen, Paula Cortes, Michael Hanlon, Maggie Booz, John Nardone, Erik Thorkildsen, Ann MacAdam

- A new website will go up soon for the Adopt-A-Tree program.
- 55 Wheeler St.: Additional information has been requested before further review

CDD representative Erik Thorkildsen updates:

- 14 Jackson Rd. near Rindge Ave: small backyard parking lot to be turned into housing needs permit as the distance from the road within 75' - they are asking special permission to build.
- Binney zoning overlay district open space plus development.
- MXD north of MIT Marriott trees cut down, added. West of Volpe.

UFMP - report on December meeting

- To improve canopy, need to stem loss and plant additional trees
- Enhance current protection ordinance - ideas were discussed such as:
  - Create a category of Exceptional trees,
  - Add triggers, e.g. large impervious areas, or requests to fell large numbers of trees
- Make tree removal more costly to the developer
- Calculate value of tree by trunk cross section area rather than diameter
- See UFMP documents on website for more information
- Increase oversight to increase compliance
- Grants to grassroots efforts, engage with property owners
- Protect 6" caliper trees, not just 8"
- Prioritize areas that need street trees - weigh the equity issue more heavily in choosing next to be planted
- Create cool corridors for pedestrians and cyclists
- Create urban forest overlay district
- Use a "green factor" rating for new development Doug Brown and Mike Nakagawa
- Suggestion by UFMP: CPP should have more teeth.
- Tree ordinances from different cities were sent to UFMP members
- MB: it's frustrating that they did random sampling instead of complete tree inventory - information is skewed
- Community resources, grassroots tree activism in NYC - trees have QR codes
- 2500 need to be planted per year to maintain current canopy
  - But the city plants around 500 per year.
  - Some of this has to be on private property
- Mortality rates 4-6%
- How best to preserve them.

General discussion:

- MH concerned about no organic matter under sidewalk
- MB feels the DPW is responding and is hopeful
  - watering program etc.

- Significant loss on private property
- Structural soil is not organic how to get tree roots to back of sidewalk if possible
- The City having good trees will inspire private individuals to have better trees much like the opposite of the broken windows theory
- MH let's bury the wires under Huron Ave.
- NJ The city will only listen if people's property values go down and it's not as desirable to live in Cambridge
- Need to consider new ways to construct sidewalks if trees are to thrive. Crusher run is full of manganese, has no fertility, and is almost impossible for trees to grow in.
- Need to consider temporary fencing for new trees in high foot traffic areas to protect them the first few years so that they can establish.

Andrew Putnam: City has new specifications for planting for the new contract for all new plantings:

- Excavate 2x10 tree well 3' deep
- New soil amended with biochar
- Compost tea Spring and Fall
- Contractor to water and weed for three years
- Break up barrier to the sides so roots can penetrate

Discussion:

- Brookline has better trees and their sidewalks are flat. Do they have better soil? They have an active public planting committee
- Hatch, formerly Chester, is to monitor the contractor, Leahy, to make sure the planting specs are followed. DPW to monitor watering
- Looking to plant a grove - longer treewells - on Mass Ave.
- Contract has just been awarded to Lahey - lowest bid
- Zondervan - ordinance to change language of tree ordinance to protect trees: monitor trees cut on private property - must have a reason but then you can cut
- Atlanta protects private trees

2019 Agenda:

- Andrew will give a budget report in February
- C2B residential districts: CPP reviews projects within this zoning district. MB reads language. Hardscape not to exceed 25%. Language about trees, planting, screening. CPP having teeth in this zoning district could set a precedent for us to have more teeth in other districts.

Action items:

- Contact the Brookline Public Planting Committee.
- Send all minutes to city councilors and city manager - Joan Krizack will send them all along when approved.