

Cambridge Committee on Public Planting
Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2021 - 5:30-7pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendance:

CPP Members: Vinita Bhaskar, Maggie Booz, Cindy Carpenter, Sara Cohen, Paula Cortes, Jill Costello, Chantal Eide, Sophia Emperador, Sandra Fairbank, Michael Hanlon, Maria Hotellet, Joan Krizack, Ahron Lerman, Ruth Loetterle, Tracy Orr, Cynthia Smith, and Belinda Tato.

DPW/City of Cambridge: Abby Bentley, Ellen Coppinger, Kara Falise, David Lefcourt, Owen O’Riordan, Andrew Putnam, Kate Riley, Erik Thorkildsen (CDD).

Meeting notes submitted by: Sophia Emperador

Agenda Items:

- 1. Review of Minutes from February**
 - There are no changes; the Minutes are accepted.
- 2. Full committee member and attendee introductions**
- 3. Project presentation: updates on the completion of Glacken Field by Kara Falise**
 - Field is located off Huron Ave & the Fresh Pond Reservation. The renovations are scheduled to be completed by summer 2021 and the tot-lot by fall 2021.
 - The upcoming construction at the Tobbin School and the West Cambridge Little League's disbursement initiated the field renovation.
 - Improvements include: natural turf, more accessible pathways, loop pathway around the property, removal of concrete bleachers, and permeable paving.
 - Project completed in succinct to the slope remediation phased project under the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan. The wood harvested from the slope remediation will be used in the Universal Playground (Danehy Park), design features within the Glacken tot-lot (scramblers and climbers), and as log pavers for areas that require vehicle access.
 - Trees will be planted around the field; species were approved by the Water Board and the Fresh Pond Master Plan Advisory Board.
 - Tot-lot: main features were chosen based on community feedback focus on water play, a splash pad, and runnel system in addition to typical play structures. Overall woodsy feel ties into the proximity of the woody area of the Reservation.
 - No street trees were proposed; those are part of a separate Huron Ave Reconstruction Project (runs up to the golf course parking lot). This design includes a 5’ wide permeable sidewalk and a 2-way separated bike lane on Huron Ave north and will also include street trees. The buffer between the bike and street could also be a good opportunity for additional plantings of trees.
 - Comments/Questions: Maggie and Cynthia mention how there seems to be a missed opportunity for more trees in the overall design.

4. Update on Tree Ordinance Amendment by Owen O’Riordan

- The ordinance was extended for an additional 60 days, with no permits until April 25.
- One additional section was added since the last revision: Duty of care. A property owner who is doing work on their property and causes damage to a tree can be held responsible for that damage.
- The next date is March 22, where it will be presented to City Council and hopefully pass to the Ordinance Committee (typically takes 2 meetings) to complete the process. The whole process needs to be wrapped up by April 25, when the ordinance expires.
- The original ordinance was for larger projects and larger trees (8”+). In 2018 an amendment was granted, which permits the authority to the DPW for removal of trees on private property (8”+). Permits could not be removed unless there were exceptional services (dangerous, emergency - cause harm, etc.).
- Comments/Questions:
 - Jill Costello - Any indication needed on whether tree is invasive or not? Does it matter what type of tree it is replaced with? Owen- A significant % are invasive, but no provision has been included; provisions in the proposal indicate mitigation by replacement trees and protection up to 10y afterward.
 - Maggie- This has been going on for a while; not much has been implemented from the UF Master Plan. Owen- Resiliency zoning has been proposed, maybe 2 mtg before it goes to City Council. DPW will be hiring 3 additional employees to plant and maintain more trees; new planting specs are being developed with ReedHilderbrand; soil studies are underway; an additional new hire- LA for the DPW, and we are working on how best to engage with private property planting. Work is coming to fruition.
 - Paula - Many projects are going on; how does this interfere with the housing overlay stated to take away a significant amount of open space. Owen- The provision exists in the existing ordinance that CHA shouldn’t be exempt from the ordinance.
 - Maggie - Can we get the leader of the CHA to come on board to include more environmental justice into their projects. Owen- CHA is under a lot of pressure to create more housing.

5. Sub-committee formation | zoning & tree protection

- Maggie will spearhead a working group (exact formulation will be determined based on the rules for open meetings) to address lack of tree protection in current zoning and in the implementation of the outcomes of the Climate Resilient Task Force.

6. Updates from City Arborists by Abby Bently

- 475 trees have been planted; 125 park/school/open space areas, the Peabody school, Longfellow park (8), golf course (50), understory trees planted at the dog park at Hawthorn/ Mt Auburn St.

7. Updates from CDD rep Erik Thorkildsen

- Upcoming public meetings of interest:
 - Jefferson Park - Second public outreach meeting coming soon, dealing with the housing overlay. Very preliminary project with time for input.

- Walden Sq - March 23
- 52 New St - March 25
- Upcoming projects presented to the Planning Board (Eric will share links to PB application materials)
 - Ragon Institute (bioresearch) - March 23: Large site, has 1-2 abandon buildings, new building proposed for the site with deep overhangs and some proposed vegetation, a list of proposed species was provided.
 - Volpe - April 6

No public comments were provided.