

Cambridge Committee on Public Planting

Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2019

Members present: Chantal Eide; Paula Cortes; Maggie Booz (co-chair); Nancy Philips; Joan Krizack; Florrie Westcoat (co-chair); Cynthia Smith; Sophia Emperador; David Lefcourt (City Arborist/Tree Warden, DPW); Erik Thorkildsen (Urban Designer, CDD); Andrew Putnam (Superintendent of Urban Forest, DPW); Ann MacAdam

Meeting notes submitted by: Sophia Emperador

Agenda Items

1. Meeting Minutes

- The November and December minutes will be provided by Sophia Emperador before the January meeting.

2. Updates from David Lefcourt, City Arborist

- Fall tree planting
 - Tree planting is still underway, should be wrapped up by Friday (12/13). Roughly 200 trees were planted under contract. 163 bare root installed this fall, 65 in the Linear Park & 55 at the golf course. Additional trees went in on Aberdeen Ave, Raymond Park, Danehy Park, Plymouth/Hampshire Plaza, 1st St street trees (B&B and bare-root elms planted for comparison) and a few around the city.
 - Overall there is a push to move to bare-root because they come with a better root system and are more economical. All were in good condition, except for the serviceberries, which haven't been doing so well. They try not to trim any roots, unless damaged, girdled, etc. Cambridge Landscape also planted a few of the bare-root ones as well this season.
 - Bare root trees are not tagged or inspected, inspection before planting could happen in the future.
- Tree holding area
 - There are plans to turn a 100 x 60 area at the golf course, behind the maintenance building and open storage bays, into a tree holding area, which should be able to hold approximately 300 trees.
- New additions to the PDW
 - 2-3 new people have been hired specifically for tree care. The Assistant City Arborist will be starting Jan 6. She is from NYC (Queens regional office) and will be invited to the January CPP meeting.
- Spring planting

- 400 trees planned for the spring. Roughly 775 were planted this calendar year, which is higher than prior years (not including replacements). This is an estimated 300-400 tree net gain on the municipal side.
- 100 trees will come from the participatory budgeting; the language is vague this year (2019), not sure if they can be used in locations other than street trees.
- Tree fund money has not been appropriated for the year as of yet.
- Opt-out tree planting option for private property
 - An ordinance to backup the change would be ideal for counter any back-push they receive.

3. Updates from Erik Thorkildsen, CDD

- Planning board mtg Tue, December 17.
 - Melissa Petters will present updates to the Alewife District Plan. Could be of interest, she will talk about tree coverage, heat island effect, amongst other topics.
 - 101 Cambridgepark Dr - presented earlier, building proposed in the existing parking lot. The developer wants to get a new pedestrian path and conversion of the parking lot approved.
- UPDATE: Triangle Park. The design was reviewed by the consultant (STOSS) and should have a re-design towards something more vegetated with less impervious surface by January. Binney St Park was also designed by STOSS, an all impervious surface design, but there are no updates as of yet.

4. Response letter to Urban Forest Master Plan Technical Document

- The technical report was released this month, public meeting presenting the results will be held Thursday, Dec 12 at 6:30-8:30pm.
- MB- Felt it was instrumental in registering our response to the document. Not sure of the following products, this was unclear to the task force - the CPP ought to weigh in on some of these ideas. The Task Force was asked to pick their top five interventions; this letter is to acknowledge the work completed and to specify which are our greatest concerns.
- PC- suggests that the letter should also be sent to the City Council and .cced to the UFMP team. Our letters, in general, are too nice to encourage impact.
- CS - suggests organizing the suggestions in the letter by major category.
- PC-Emphasis should be placed on the third paragraph, a lot of money and time was devoted to this effort, now it's up to the city to put this into action. This needs to be something people will pay attention to, the time has come for action. Is there any way to follow up on the letter, some sort of monitoring.
- NP- Good letter but suggests that the exemption for open space requirements for affordable housing be kept. Reword it to make it more general but removing the affordable housing portion.
- General suggestion to add more language about CPP's role moving forward.

- The letter focuses on efforts on City-owned land; private property has the highest % of loss, how would our position deal with this aspect.
- Specify which recommendations are within the report and which are new.
- Send comments to current city councilors and again in Jan to the newly appointed members.
- MB has offered to re-write the letter based on the comments and suggestions provided. The letter should be submitted by the end of the year.

5. There was no public comment.