

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING

### MINUTES OF MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2019

PRESENT: Chantal Eide, Ann McAdam, Sophia Emperador, Seanna Berry, Joan Krizack, Nancy Jordalen, Cynthia Smith, Florrie Wescoat, Maggie Booz, Nancy Phillips (minutes-taker); Don MacAdam (visitor); David Lefcourt, Ellen Coppinger and Andrew Putnam, DPW; Erik Thorkildsen, CDD.

1. JANUARY MINUTES: Approved, with a few corrections.
2. ARBORIST'S UPDATE:
  - SPRING PLANTING: Roughly 450 trees are to be planted, species currently being determined. CPP asked if a location/species map could be provided. Leahy has the planting contract.
  - PRUNING: Cambridge Landscape is currently working in E. Cambridge; some recent work areas: city golf course, Raymond Park.
  - EMERALD ASH BORER: EAB has been identified in Cambridge, and populations will likely increase in next 5-7 years. It's expected that the treatment will be ramped up as of 2020. Half of (City-owned) ash population gets treated each year, currently contractor is gearing up to do this year's treatment. Current treatment inhibits life cycle development and reduces female fertility. (There was some discussion of potential downside of the treatment. The state of MA is working to develop bio-controls [insect enemies, e.g. a predatory wasp].) C. Smith asked what the goal of current treatment regime is; D. Lefcourt responded that the intent is to try to save every city-owned ash tree.
  - LOCATIONS FOR REMAINING PARTICIPATORY-BUDGET TREES (N = 65): D. Lefcourt is focusing on park-like locations and on locations identified as heat islands for the next round of PB trees.
  - PLANTINGS IN TREE WELLS: There was brief discussion about the need to discourage people from planting gardens in tree wells, especially when this involves adding inches of soil.
3. KENDALL SQUARE PROJECT:
  - The project will be a large building on Main Street near the Marriot Hotel (replacing the building with the MIT Coop), and roughly the height of the hotel. A number of other new buildings are also proposed in the vicinity. The site is in a PUD zoning area.
  - There have been concerns about the proposed structure shading the adjacent rooftop garden; the building's proposed form has been adjusted in response to these concerns, but there will still be shading.

- Thus the developers have proposed to redesign the roof garden. The proposed redesign (by Lemon Brooke LA) includes an area of “synthetic lawn.” This proposal will come before the Planning Board.
  - M.Booz pointed out that CPP has no authority with respect to this proposal other than to comment to the Planning Board. Planning Board will review the project on March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - CPP will make these points in its letter to the Planning Board: We urge that the building be configured to cast as little shadow as possible, and as much sunlight as possible for the existing roof garden; we urge elimination of the artificial turf proposed for the existing roof garden; and we encourage the inclusion of green space on the roof of the proposed building.
  - The project will also involve transplanting a number of street trees. The tree ordinance will not be triggered as the trees are not being removed but relocated.
4. COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING’S ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES: E. Thorkildsen provided the following information.
- The governing language is:
    - Municipal Code 2.106: CPP to advise the City Manager (and others) on issues of public planting.
    - Zoning Code 5.31(k)(2): CPP to approve all “landscaping and maintenance” plans in Residential C2B zones.
    - Zoning Code 5.33(e): CPP to approve all “landscaping and maintenance” plans in Business zones B1 and B2.
  - It was noted that the kinds and locations of projects over which CPP has Zoning authority seem almost random. It was also pointed out that there exist no guidelines for CPP approval, so that CPP decisions could be seen as capricious. It is hoped that the Urban Forest Master Plan process will lead to a clearer definition of CPP’s role and responsibilities.
5. 55 WHEELER STREET UPDATE: Developer has submitted a final tree plan, with caliper calculations: they are removing roughly 1400 caliper inches, will replace roughly 800 inches in new trees, and will contribute to the Tree Fund for the remaining inches. (The required amount is \$850 per inch.)
6. PROPOSED TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE: The revised proposal goes to the Ordinance Committee of City Council tomorrow. (The proposal called for a moratorium on tree removal until completion of the Urban Forest Master Plan process; it was referred to Council by the Ordinance Committee, but Council sent it back to Ordinance Committee.) A proposed letter from CPP to the Ordinance Committee was discussed and some modifications made. Ann MacAdam will present the letter to the Committee at tomorrow’s meeting.
7. STEVEN HANDEL TALK - BRIEF RECAP: the talk was excellent.

8. POTENTIAL TREE REMOVAL - 32 VINEYARD STREET: Developer wants City approval of a curb cut that would require removal of a tree on adjacent private property. D. Lefcourt says this is not a public shade tree; if it were, it would be protected under the Ch.87 MA Shade Tree Law that states that public shade trees include trees on private property that provide shade to a public way.

9. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Further clarification of CPP's role and authority.
- Letter to Ordinance Committee on proposed tree removal Moratorium