

PUBLIC PLANTING COMMITTEE -- MEETING MINUTES: March 11, 2020

Attendees: Florrie Wescoat, Nancy Phillips, Chantal Eide, Paula Cortes, Cynthia Smith, Maggie Booz, Sophia Emperador, Nancy Jordalen; Abby Bentley, Andrew Putman David Lefcourt, Ellen Coppinger (DPW); Erik Thorkildsen, Gary Chan (CDD); Fancesca Holinko.

1. Review of February Minutes

There are no changes; the Minutes are accepted.

2. Updates from David Lefcourt, City Arborist

Arbor Week: Planning is under way. Tentative schedule is for a kickoff Friday 4/24 (actual Arbor Day). There will be a tree planting event, tree poetry signs around schools; a city hall display (including gator bag information); tree seedlings handed out; library tabling and story reading for little kids; a tree scavenger hunt for kids; a tree walk. Additional sites are under consideration. Getting the public's attention will be, as always, challenging, with the corona-virus compounding the challenge.

Tree Planting: The tree planting contractor (Lahey) has started cutting about 90 new tree wells and enlarging existing wells. The new well are excavated to about 18". This work should be completed in about 2 weeks, after which planting should begin. About 200 street trees plus another 200 park trees (roughly 20 species) have been tagged.

The City's eventual goal is to plant 1200-1500 trees per year, with significantly larger budget for both planting and maintenance, and to ramp up in-house rather than contractor planting and maintenance.

Roughly 200 bare-root trees are currently being held at Fresh Pond. The goal is to have a range of stock to select from, also to allow the root ball to grow before being planted.

3. CDD Update -- Erik Thorkildsen, CDD Representative

101 Cambridgepark Drive: The Planning Board approved this development project last night, with landscape changes that reduce the developer's overall caliper deficit: new trees increased from 57 to 64; transplanted trees increased from 4 to 6; and some missing street trees filled in.

4. Presentation on Triangle Park design -- Gary Chan, CDD

Bounded by Binney St., First St., and Land Blvd., this site was donated to the City by a developer. It has undergone partial environmental remediation (removal of urban fill) but the City will have to remediate remaining parts of the site.

CDD has been working with Stoss landscape architects and has significantly modified the design that was shown earlier to CPP, reducing proposed hardscape and adding more trees. The design features three areas: an Urban Grove (with porous paving, a lot of

flowering trees, and a lot of seating); a dense Upland Forest; and a Lowland Forest. A proposed sidewalk through the triangle follows the desire line from the Land Blvd./Binney St. corner towards Linskey Way.

CPP raised several issues:

=The Urban Grove, which is meant to provide space for human activity, can't be planted with lots of ornamental trees (as currently designed) because their branches will be low and will interfere with people. Also, the proposal calls for too many trees in this area.

=There is a native dogwood on site which, though healthy, is slated for removal. (CDD responded that this is because the proposed grade needs to be changed) Note: The tree can only be relocated within the Park because contaminated soil will be clinging to its roots.

The earlier design involved water retention; this one does not, because there are other ways of capturing runoff in the area.

CDD asked CPP to suggest appropriate tree species. CPP's response: there should be fewer trees overall and mostly a high canopy. The obvious tree is honeylocust, but Cambridge has already a maximum number of honeylocusts. Other suggested species: oaks, goldenrain, tulip tree. Also cherry (*prunus serotina*); redbud; non-invasive species of mulberry;

CPP is asked to send any further species suggestions to CDD.

5. Proposed Letter to City Manager about publicizing the Urban Forest

We discussed whether the City Manager's newsletter would be the best vehicle for this, and concluded that it would be. There was concern about which newsletter -- i.e. the spring letter (which focuses entirely on City budget) or the fall letter -- we should propose for the inclusion of tree publicity. We decided that CPP's letter to the City Manager should simply inform him that we have a piece ready for him to send out, and see how he responds.

A number of revisions to the letter were proposed, in addition to miscellaneous wording changes:

=eliminate link to the tree protection ordinance

=stronger emphasis on Urban Forest Master Plan

=revise 4th paragraph go be more scientific, less poetic