

## **Committee on Public Planting**

Meeting Minutes – July 2021 Meeting

Date& Time: July 14, 2021 5:30-7:15ish

Location: King Open School grounds (in person)

Attendees: 17 in total

R. Loetterle, C. Carpenter, J. Costello, S. Cohen, T. Orr, M. Booz, C. Smith, J. Krizack, C. Eide, P. Cortez, S. Emperador, A. Putnam, D. Lefcourt, A. Bently, E. Thorkildensen, K. Riley, newly appointed LA to the city of Cambridge Kevin Beuttell.

### Agenda Items:

#### 1. Overview and tour of the key landscape elements of the King Open School

D. Lefcourt, opens the meeting by reminding attendees that plans of King Opens School landscape development were presented to CPP 4-5 years ago. 147 new trees were planted on the property Fall 2019. Most were in the 3"-4" cal, up to 5-6" caliper trees. Initial loss was only approx 10 trees & all were/will be replaced. David shared that DPW, or contractor hired by city DPW, deals with grounds (tree planting & maintenance) of all public schools and library campuses. D. Lefcourt shared about irrigation at King Open campus. All except approx 5 trees are on automatic irrigation system. Those 5 are on the city's manual watering plan.

Discussed the geothermal grid system at King Open campus. Is a 20x20 grid that serves as a rainwater holding area to allow for stormwater management and slow dispersal back into the ground. It includes a 30,000 gallon tank and is located under the South courtyard. No trees planted atop the grid/tank.

Group toured around the campus noting the 4 honey locust trees along west edge of campus that were saved (existed on property before building & grounds renovation). Planting wells in sidewalk were opened up and connected to improve root environment & rainwater capture potential for these trees.

Group noted tree selection in the playground area as Stag horn sumac, an unexpected choice. Tree wells in play area were very small and surface material around is FlexPave. Plants looked healthy.

Group discussed the water play (spray deck) area near the community building. Several trees suffering/dead due to grade issues and standing water. City is meeting soon to discuss changes to improve this area: grade changes in paving and/or species selection. Some honey locusts in this area are suffering sun cracks. Planting by contractors unfortunately is not always perfect.

#### 2. Current project: Tobin school project & proposed tree removals

Group discussed a bit about the tree removal/planting plans for Tobin School. CPP has concerns with plans to remove many mature trees both for parking and stormwater

retention tanks. Members noted particular concern with 3 large London Plane trees in the corner near autobody shop. M. Booz shares info about how a variance from zoning will be needed to put the tanks in the location of the current 3 large trees. Many other complicating factors involved with that corner of the property. Efforts were made to save as many mature trees on the property as possible. CPP brought concerns to developers, but no immediate reply received. Members voiced desires to see plans earlier in the process so committee can have a stronger voice in the tree demo/planting plans of large projects. S. Emperador suggested maybe CPP should be part of the community forum phase of discussion that occurs earlier in the developers' plan review process.

### 3. Neighborhood discussion/tour

Group briefly observed the Donnelly Fields behind King Open, noting additional trees planted there. Informal groupings of trees planted along field edges are successful both in tree health and in community use for shade, recreation, etc. Not enough time left in meeting to tour the surrounding neighborhood.

Discussion that next CPP meeting would be in September and likely in person. Date TBD.