

City of Cambridge Committee on Public Planting
Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2022 - 5:30-7pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendance

CPP Members: Maggie Booz, Cindy Carpenter, Sara Cohen, Paula Cortes, Chantal Eide, Sophia Emperador, Sandra Fairbank, Maria Hottelet, Ahron Lerman, Ruth Loetterle, Tracey Orr, Cynthia Smith

DPW/City of Cambridge: Abby Bentley, Ellen Coppinger, Andrew Putnam

Guests & members of the public: DC Denison

Meeting notes submitted by: Sophia Emperador

Agenda Items:

1. Current open space projects throughout the City - Kevin Beuttell

2. Updates from City Arborist, Abby Bently

3. Updates from CDD Rep Erik Thorkildsen

4. Other items for discussion:

- Heatwave damage
 - Failed plantings across the City - watering couldn't keep up with the demand.
 - Failed irrigation system at Danehy.
 - How can the city-wide watering protocol be updated for extreme heat events? What can be done next time to minimize the damage - planning, resources, citizen-led events, education campaigns??
- Updates on the Memorial Drive Reconstruction
- Letter to new City Manager on behalf of the CPP - ID top 2/3 priority items we would like to address
- Discuss larger efforts such as: Letter to City Council/City Manager, maybe a council order? - re: affordable and low-income housing developers and property owners need to be held to the same green space and tree protection ordinances that all private property owners are held to - counterintuitive to the environmental efforts as a City at large.

5. Public comments

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1. Update on current open space projects throughout the City - Kevin Beuttell

-Sennott Park (Norfolk St/Broadway) - phase 1 improvements underway including: tot lot, courts, upgraded field (fall 2023 if conditions are right)

-Triangle Park (designed by Stoss, scheduled to open in 2023) - construction is underway, contractors have been good about watering the trees, large amount of bare root trees scheduled to be planted in the fall

-Binney St - (designed by Stoss) - ground breaking at the end of the month, keeping an eye on the large cottonwood tree, chainlink is up now to keep cars off of the root system

-question was asked about synthetic turf and PFAS leaching - a rigorous review process if done before it is installed on any project

-Linear Park -redesign - Danehy and the New Street Connector - CDD has a house doctor contract for landscape design services for the park

CPP Questions:

MB- any preference given to Cambridge residents during the contracting phase? | KB-oversight is given to CDD, they interview the subs and match projects or send it out to bid

RL- CPP representative for the Linear Park project - comments/updates: loose presentation of ideas to gauge city standpoint, no updated plan has been presented, design process is underway encourage tree protection, decompact soil, proposed improvements, min pathway width, drainage improvement

2. Updates from City Arborist, Abby Bently

-emerald ash borer treatments have been completed & traps are checked every 2-3 weeks

- new contract out for young tree training for trees planted within 3y, bid has not been awarded yet
- gearing up for fall planting, Lahey is cutting new tree well sites now
 - 40 different species, 400 ROW trees, 700 bare root trees delivered to the golf course nursery and are heeled in; largest delivery to date
- bare root nursery is 90% complete, including a composite brewer and irrigation
- PDW plants mostly bare root trees, Lahey plants B&B trees
- PDW is slowly transitioning to plant all bare root; they take better to urban sites

CPP Questions:

SE-did the drought this summer change the planting this year? | AP - yes, they have incorporated more drought tolerant species in their planting list

CC-how many back of sidewalk program requests have there been this season? | AB - 8 trees have been requested/referred so far

Heatwave damage

- this summer the City had the lowest number of water-by-bike interns (most efficient way to water)
- they will review more effective ways to fill positions (interns and supervisor positions)
- water by truck is good for publicity, but not very efficient
- during the worst of the drought it was almost like a snow event overnight, triage process to mitigate the emergency: DPW has 2 watering trucks, Lahey has 4 watering trucks and would all go out in 12hr shifts; all divisions helped to water; staff & resources were maxed out
- DPW also encouraged citizens to help water as well, boards were placed at intersections around the City to raise awareness
- will have to wait until next spring to see the real damage caused
- Danehy failure -it was an old irrigation system, the pump blew out and the whole system failed

CPP Questions/Discussions:

MH - How do we know the Lahey trucks were actually watering, they were only seen idling around the city? | AP- their progress is charted in Cartograph

AL - is the Miyawaki forest irrigated? | AP - no, it is not

RL - improper tree plantings on N Mass Ave, root balls sitting above the ground-level | AB - they will take a look at the specific trees. Every tree is now inspected/QAQC by Abby or Dave, measured and recorded in Cartograph

CW- tree replacement system for cutting a mature tree seems harsh during a year with extreme droughts when it is hard to establish a new tree. Could the formula change during years of drought?

Outreach opportunities:

PC-tree information should be available at library branches, such as how to sign up to be a forest friend, info also available at the front desk at DPW

TO-public schools, are another good way to reach parents; city sprouts

CS- other communities, state DCR have a clearing house of what is happening around town; local list serves

-develop an insert about the importance of trees into water bill

Bridge the City /MIT divide (grounds dept) on campus contributions:

- limit the cutting of mature trees on institutional property
- forest friends tag-participate monthly to-do list with citizens help (most people have no idea why it matters) advocate to take care of 1 tree, we need people to help

3)(Erik Thorkildsen was unable to attend)

5)Others items

- SE-the letter to the City Manager has been drafted and will be distributed for further editing and commentary

5. Public comments

No public comments were made.

CPP - September 2022